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IN LONDON TOWN

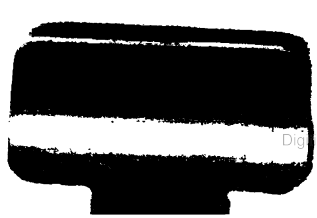


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"AT THE FRIVOL"

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By F. BERKELEY



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IN LONDON TOWN

By F. BERKELEY SMITH

Author of "The Real Latin Quarter," "How Paris Amuses Itself," "Parisians Out of Doors," Etc.



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Foreword

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Foreword

BOOKSHELVES the world over sag under the weight of ponderous volumes fashioned by genial wise men who claim to have known London better than Pepys, Thackeray, or Dickens.

Mine has been but a passing glance in the crowd—the impressions which might have been gained by any traveller who crossed the Channel, hired a hansom at Charing Cross, and lost himself in the throng. My home having been in France for many years, I have naturally looked at London Town through Parisian spectacles set in an American frame, and, remembering the sagging shelves and ponderous volumes and all the helpful data bound between their covers, I have been careful to omit all reference to the Tower and all directions how to see the cathedrals, the Houses of Parliament, the Zoo, and the British Museum, between breakfast and luncheon.

F. B. S.

PARIS, 1906.

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CHAPTER I

To London Town

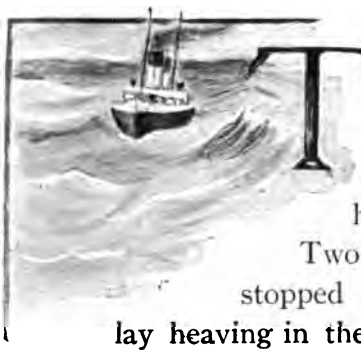
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CHAPTER I

To London Town



THE girl crawled out of her rug and straightened her hat while the neat little stewardess helped her to her feet.

Two bells clanged; the engines stopped and the channel steamer lay heaving in the yellow swash of the sea off the massive pier of Folkestone. Had it been rough?

Even the weather-beaten sailor at my elbow wiped the salt out of his eyes with the sleeve of his jersey and confessed:

"It *was* a bit narsty, sir, wasn't it? North-easter, sir—get 'em in November 'ere, we do—we'll be farst in a minute, sir!" and his great thumbs busied themselves with the bight of a line.

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A tall, sunburnt, soldierly Englishman leaning against the rail in a tawny Scotch ulster pulled hard at his pipe and gazed joyously at the cheerless leaden roofs and the cold cliffs showing ghostlike through the drenching fog, a fog that stung one's throat.

"Home, by Jove!" I heard him say.

On leave from his regiment, no doubt, in a land of fever and sand and lying natives. His clean-cut features were relaxed now in a smile; his eyes shining.

As the sturdy steamer armed with her powerful turbines crept in the lee of the sheltering masonry, she ceased her heaving. She had made a quick trip considering all things, and from the moment she had slipped clear of Boulogne had forged her way to England and, with that incessant tremble and throb of her turbines, dashed through a heavy sea. She had not hesitated an instant; her duty was to keep on and get it over with, and her fat pilot had driven her straight.

One does not select the English Channel for a pleasure trip—this stretch of water with a bad reputation is as fickle as any woman and as untrustworthy as some. Having lured you out

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upon a smooth sea it may play you false halfway across. Or it may on short notice lash itself into an ugly mood, when it seems to take especial delight in a hundred tricks unconducive to digestion. Upon such occasions the chop sea hisses in a snakelike wake from the stern. The heave, pitch, and drop, the savage onslaught of wind and water, all in bad company, fall upon the sturdy, spotlessly clean little vessel and tax her grit and power to her utmost, but on she goes—swiftly and unheeding—twice daily, rain or shine.

This sole communication between La Belle France and solid England must be taken philosophically like a bad draft, and yet it is surprising how quickly one forgets the sea and the ship. Land is so welcome.

Other people now got to their feet—shook themselves and hunted helplessly for their hand luggage. Out of the chintz upholstered and spotless private cabins fine ladies, bereft of their usual poise and dignity, found their way shakily to the deck, and joined the crowd of other passengers impatiently waiting for the gang-plank.

In the crowd were crying children, fat drummers with brass-cornered suit-cases, a jockey

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with a saddle, three Italians longing for home, and a very young lord accompanied by a valet and a bag of golf clubs.

Behind the massive pier rugged British tars were attending to hawser and line. A steam crane held the gang-plank suspended in its grip. It dangled aloft, its every movement watched by the waiting throng.

A young Parisienne, trim in her *chic costume de voyage*, on tiptoe to keep her pretty high heels off the drenched deck, stood gazing beside me at the sullen fog-swept town.

"Mon Dieu!" was all she exclaimed at her first glance of England.

And I turned to her and said in sympathy:

"Vous avez raison, Madame."

"It is horrible, Monsieur, this fog," she replied.

"And you have never seen it before?" I ventured.

"Non, Monsieur—my sister is quite ill. I have come to bring her back to Paris. Ah! Mon Dieu, quel temps! quel voyage!" she sighed. "It is to freeze one's blood, is it not!" and she shivered under her dainty furs.

Orders were now being quietly given by gray-

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bearded men and blue-coated officials. No one shrugged his shoulders, and every one knew precisely what to do, which is more than I can say for a French port.

Mademoiselle turned suddenly and looked at me appealingly.

"You are English, Monsieur, it is so easy for you to——"

"No, American," I replied.

"But you speak the language, eh—a little?"

"We are supposed to," I answered, "but our English is not accepted as the standard at Oxford."

"I can not speak a word, Monsieur. It is very difficult for me. Would you mind helping me to the train?"

"With pleasure, Madame."

And as I raised my hat and stood wiping the spray from the brim, I felt her glance within where was emblazoned the mark of a little hatter on the Boulevard St. Michel.

Her eyes brightened.

"You are of the Quartier—a student? Yes, is it not so?"

"Yes; how did you guess?"

"You would never have bought your hat

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there if you were not. I am so glad," she said frankly.

"Then you have better confidence in me?"

"Certes!" she replied, and she held out her hand. "Why, parbleu, we are of the same quartier."

"And of the same big family," I added.

"Mais oui! Bien sur," said she merrily.

"Is that English they are speaking now?" she asked, drawing nearer to me as naturally as if we were old friends.

"It is a kind of English," I explained. "Some of it is not altogether clear to me. It is a patois known as cockney."

"And there are no gestures with it?"

"None," I said.

"Then it can be only half a language," she replied thoughtfullly. "Ah! I should not like to be obliged to speak so coldly as that. It does not seem natural. I could never be able to—to express myself," and her small gloved hands said the rest.

"You must not forget the *entente cordiale*, Madame."

"Pouf!" she replied with a little toss of her head. "C'est de la blague ça!"

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And as she said it, the steam crane dropped the gang-plank in place.

Beyond a line of polite custom officials to whom one's word was sufficient, was in waiting a solid, clean, and comfortable train, attended by guards whose sole duty was to attend to your comfort, and they did it, quietly, with intelligence and respect. I could not help noticing the politeness, decency, and despatch with which the custom officials waited upon the line of passengers. They were an agreeable contrast to that swaggering horde of ill-mannered hirelings to be found on arrival at a New York dock. In England one does not have to talk politics or pay for telling the truth—gentlepeople are treated with that respect due to their station in life. In England the law is all-powerful and enforced to the



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letter, but it is carried out with dignity and by intelligent officials.

"Mademoiselle," not madame, as I was graciously informed, settled herself contentedly by the compartment window. Boys were hurrying past with hot tea, that conservative British beverage. Another steam crane picked up the steamer's baggage in the same steel compartments in which it had been packed in Paris, and soon had it in our luggage van.

"Telegram for you, sir!" called an urchin in a smart little uniform and a pill box cocked nearly over his ear and secured under his ruddy chin by a patent-leather strap. Compartment doors were slammed and securely locked; an able-looking official rang a dinner bell, and we slid out of Folkestone, past the broad platform, its edge nearly flush with the train as a further safeguard against accident.

The track we ran over was in marked contrast to the French one to the sea which had given to the express from Paris a lunging rock that was more in keeping with a boat than a train, but the ballast of an English line is as solid as the ground upon which it lies. For the English line is flanked by neat hedges and has

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no level crossings to annihilate unlucky pedestrians.

We pulled out of Folkestone reeking in the chill fog and the desultory smoke from a sea of chimney pots, capped upon a vast expanse of ancient roofs. We were speeding now past great factories, their tall chimneys belching more smoke, past scores of signboards announcing the mellowest brands, the oldest ale, and the surest matches. "Try the new sweets," ran another in plain blue letters.

Mademoiselle, who had saved her high heels from the drenched deck, sitting opposite me, observed out of the corner of her merry eyes the homespun skirt and solid mannish-looking shoes of her neighbor. The girl at her side wore, too, a Norfolk jacket and a coaching pin stuck rakishly in a spotless white scarf. She was a curiosity to this little Parisienne, and she regarded her in wonderment. None the less strange to her was the ruddy old gentleman diagonally opposite, provided with a huge Gladstone which might still serve his grandson a lifetime. Next to the Gladstone was an equally solid leather case containing a pair of the best guns and a green plaid rug.

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No one spoke save the little Parisienne and myself. In France conversation would have been quite general. But the Englishman does not strike an acquaintance as easily. He, as a rule, has a horror of appearing conspicuous, or of intruding, or of making a mistake. As a result his conversation to a stranger is modest and guarded. He can not comprehend the volubility of the French or that hail-fellow-well-met type of American who regards all passengers as his *fellow* passengers, and yet the average total stranger is a good fellow, I believe, all over the world, and the chance of the intelligent being "buncoed" is exceedingly small.

Mile after mile the express whizzed past orderly stations on its rush to London.

Once clear of Folkestone, the air was impregnated with a hazy blue mist. For brief moments the sun struggled through and flooded the wet fields of snug farms, tipping with its saffron light the edges of the clipped hedges of box.

A golden pheasant startled by the train skimmed along in a fluttering flight to the protection of a neighboring wood.

Rows upon rows of hop poles covered acres

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bordering the railway so precisely placed that one could look through them diagonally to their limits. We went past sturdy oaks and woodlands, the home of the preserved rabbit and the hare.

Now and then there flashed by a glimpse of some solid-looking mansion half smothered in ivy with its kennels and outlying stables. But the sun can not assert itself longer, for we were nearing the edge of the great city. In its place there settled over all a saffron-colored fog.

I believe there is not a city in any land without its characteristic odor. This odor of cannel coal permeates England, growing in strength according to the size of the city. In London it has become a triple essence. It is just as typical of London as that omnipresent smell of asphalt and wet dust is of Paris or the oozy reek is of a Venetian canal.

It made the little Parisienne cough and repeat her "mon Dieus!"

"And your sister, Mademoiselle," I asked, "how came she to come to London?"

"She is a *danseuse* at the Opéra, Monsieur. It is the climate, I am sure. I shall soon return to Paris and take her with me. I

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had no idea it was like this. Poor Annette! she is so courageous over her art; we were all against her coming—mama—papa—all our family, but she was offered a good engagement, and we, we are not rich."

"Ah, you know Paris," she added, after a little pause. "The Luxembourg—the Boulevard St. Michel—and you know well this great London we are coming to?"

"The Luxembourg and the 'Boul Miche,' yes," I said, "but I do not know London. That is why I am here. If I knew anything about it I should never have dared venture upon my present mission."

"I do not understand," said she.

"Suffice it for me to say then that you must consider me as a stranger in an unknown land, seeing what he can of a city in which it will be difficult for him to distinguish right from left, that he may carry away with him a series of impressions of what he happens to see."

"Ah! I understand," she replied. "Then it is not for romance that you come to this cold England?" she laughed.

"Jamais de la vie," said I.

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We had reached the borderland of East London now and another dreary sea of roofs lying under the murky pall. Now and then I caught a glimpse of some wretched alley. A girl and a man were arguing in the slime outside a "pub." Hundreds upon hundreds of gruesome-looking byways cut, turn, and intersect the roofs below the tracks.

It is not life that the wretchedly poor live down there. The reek, the filth, and slime, the dingy, sanded saloons, poverty, hunger, brawl, and drink, drink, drink, such as it is, make up their day and night.

"The Best of Bitters!" ran a sign upon a blackened roof.

Bitter it was indeed—cruelly bitter.

"Look down there, quick, Mademoiselle!" I cried, and as she did so, I saw her eyes fill with tears.

"Pauvres gens!" she murmured.

To it Belleville, the neighborhood of the Halles, the outskirts of Vaugirard and La Villette were even gay.

We thundered on, over trestle and culvert; massive buildings loomed past in the fog; great solid piles of stone, gloomy factories busy

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BLACK PATCHES OF BARGES DRIFTED IN THE TIDE.

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as beehives glittering in electricity, all of them making things to last and making them well for the most solid nation on the globe. We slowed down to take the Charing Cross Railroad bridge over the Thames.

Far down in the swirling yellow water black patches of barges drifted in the tide; men were crawling over them like ants. Beyond them, a mass of blue-gray, almost a silhouette in smoke, rose majestically the buildings of Parliament.

To the wharves below came the ships of all nations—iron colliers, strong schooners from the spice islands and beyond, able, full-rigged vessels from the colonies, steamers from India and Japan, brigantines from Singapore, and a forest of others bringing to England the wealth of her possessions and her trade. The drone of screeching tugs and the belching smoke of steamers rose from that mighty yellow tide.

There are some to whom the Thames on its way through London has appealed as an enchanted river—a fairy river if you will, slowly boiling and eddying through a magic city. To Whistler it became a mystic ethereal fairyland, a poetic waterway along which seen through the veil of fog and smoke even the blackened warehouses

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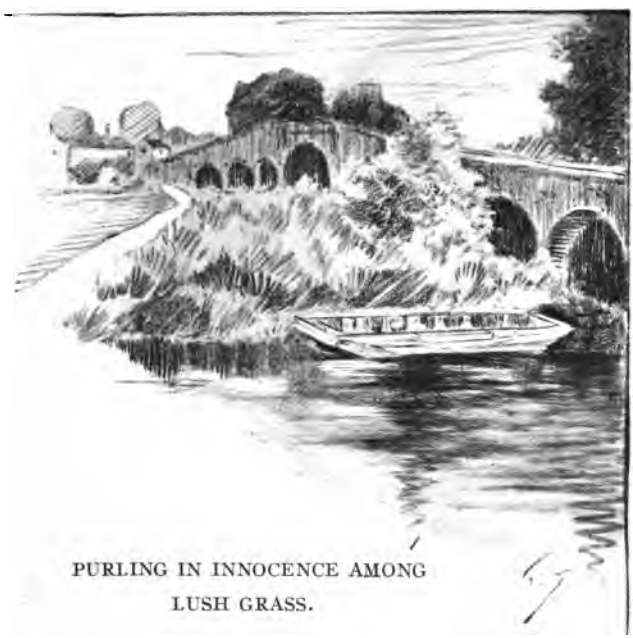
became palaces. The lace and tangle and snare of rigging, the great ships straining at anchor, the sullen groups of floating barge and towing tug—all these he transformed by the magic of his dry point and brush into enchanted places.

Turner saw in it the wealth of Oriental splendor. To him the waves were of molten gold, the ships treasuries of color overspilling their riches as did the Venetian galleys; not the squalor, the reek, the sullen fog, the daily toil of endless thousands struggling, starving in the slime and chill. Along this river front are to be found some of the worst elements civilization has thus far produced—thieves, murderers, sailors, besotted, homeless women, longshoremen, gin-drinkers reeling from the "pubs." These the most efficient police in the world will tell you are the real touches upon the canvas.

It is hard to realize that, before it comes to town, this historic stream is one of the most pastoral of rivers, that it purls in innocence among lush grass and green reeds, finding its way in and out, past cozy inns and lawns gay in flowers, making its course capriciously until it hardly leaves one adorable spot untouched,—a river for luxurious houseboats, pretty girls,

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gay parasols, and idle "punts" drifting up to fine estates animated with garden parties. Here is the quickening melody of a Hungarian band, there the splash of a fresh bait at the end



PURLING IN INNOCENCE AMONG LUSH GRASS.

of some holiday angler's line. What a delicious little river it is before it knows London,—all smiles and sunshine in June, still rippling and laughing to itself in October, and as it slips

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along under the falling leaves even restful in November!

We had suddenly switched to a labyrinth of tracks dotted with locomotives shining in green paint and freshly wiped brass, breathing and biding their time, solid plain engines these, built for long service. Here, too, flanking the embankment gardens were the great hotels towering like some richly carved palisade—sculptured, balconized, and lavishly windowed and glittering in electricity—cities in themselves.

An instant later we had rolled into the mouth of the great station at Charing Cross—a giant shed, chill and dark under its smoke-grimed hood of glass.

In the gloom were hurrying porters and more polite officials who seemed to take an especial care of every one as if they had expected your arrival.

His Grace, the Duke of Somebody, is getting goutily into his brougham.

A porter is after my trunks. An official goes into the maze of vehicles, straightens them out of a tangle, and procures a hansom for Mademoiselle and a "growler" for me.

Things move briskly without a particle of

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trouble on your part and gratifying intelligence on theirs. Big, strong men these are in quiet uniforms, and the horses that come jogging up to their call are sturdy and in alert condition.

It is a serious business this running of London, and there are few more serious places than its great terminals with thousands pouring into them daily and thousands pouring out.

"Now, then, look lively, cabby!" cries the giant in the uniform as Mademoiselle climbs in.

"Bli' me, if 'e isn't goin' to stop 'ere all night," remarks the hansom cabby behind to the growler cabby blocking the way.

"'Ere y' are, sir!" returns the red-faced director of my growler's steed.

"Bon voyage, et merci mille fois," comes the cheery voice of Mademoiselle.

The next instant her hansom wheels sharply about and I catch sight of her little, gloved hand waving to me.

"Where to, sir?" asked the giant in uniform, opening the door of the growler.

"The Savoy."

"SAVOY," he shouts above the din, and we

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clatter out of the station into the tide of London Town.

It is five o'clock and the Strand is full of hurrying humanity. They swarm as thick as ants along the sidewalks. You might think it a crowd pouring away after seeing a procession, but it is only the usual tide of the Strand. They dodge past each other, occasionally stopping to look at the brilliantly lighted windows of the cheaper jewelers' and silversmiths' shops. Young and old of every age and of every class jostle one another's elbows in the tide. The street itself is compact and alive from curb to curb with traffic—a vast sea of omnibuses, of drays, of hansom cabs, of costers' carts hauled by trotting little donkeys—of ponderous vans, automobiles, bicycles, and private carriages, the latter getting through the traffic to and from the great hotels.

Suddenly you are stopped. You look about you. You are hemmed in by fifty vehicles—east, west, north, and south—and the air is lively with the badinage of coster and bus drivers and the chaff of the draymen.

What has happened? An accident?

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No. Simply a "bobby" twenty yards ahead in the maze has raised his hand. There is no disputing that; no one tries to drive on or even seek a chance to get through; the blue-coated, helmeted bobby's raised hand is as efficient as a Gatling gun. In doing so he has not even been required to raise his voice. In a moment you are en route again.



Lights glow ahead, haloed in the fog.

"Extra spee-shul!" cries a newsboy, taking advantage of another halt in traffic to thrust an evening edition under your nose. "Good luck, sir—good luck, sir," he repeats, touching his cap as you extricate a copper. The next instant he is darting like a rabbit among the labyrinth of vehicles after a fresh customer.

Half an hour later the Channel, the slime and fog, and the crowded thoroughfare are but a memory, for you are sunk in an easy-chair before a cheery fire in a palace of a hotel and the presiding good fairy is behind the bar chatting

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with you over the latest bit at the Gaiety and freezing for you in a silver shaker equal parts of "two seasoned liqueurs, a dash of orange bitters, and there you are!"



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CHAPTER II

On the Outskirts of the Frivol

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CHAPTER II



The Outskirts of the Frivol

I HAD survived through a London Sunday, and the solemn-looking clock on the smoking-room mantel struck five. At this end of the velvet-carpeted smoking-room was a quiet little bar and behind it a cheery middle-aged barmaid. The clock ticked and the barmaid and I spoke to each other at intervals as I scanned the day's papers. So still was this cozy smoking-room tucked away in the big hotel that I was not aware of a third person entering it until I caught sight of him over the edge of the *Times* as my eye ran over the top of a refreshingly unsensational column giving the present state of affairs in St. Petersburg.

The newcomer who now stood chatting with

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the cheery little spinster as she opened for him a sparkling bottle of soda was perhaps thirty years of age. He was tall and soldierly, with a wiry slimness about him as he stood in his long rain-coat, his eyes, frank and brilliant as a hawk's, shaded by the brim of his derby.

"You've not been in for a long time, Captain Radcliffe," said the little woman, fussing with a stubborn cork.

"No," he replied absently, "been in Suffolk. Had some ripping shooting."

"Dear me," sighed the little woman, "I wish I could get away. I've had my vacation tho," and out popped the cork.

"Thank you!" said he—"enough!" and he touched the neck of the bottle she was pouring, and with his fine, aristocratic hand raised the glass to his lips.

I gathered my scattered newspapers discreetly out of his way and resumed my conversation with the barmaid.

"And you've not been to the Gaiety yet?" said she, turning to me. "They say the new piece is a great hit."

"Rather!" drawled the captain. "Ripping good show at the 'Frivol.'"

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"Do you mean the Gaiety Theater?" ventured the barmaid.

"The Frivol's not a bad name for it," returned the captain. "*We* always call it the Frivol. Good old name, Frivol—rather!"

His "rather" this time I felt was half addressed to me.

Londoners are not in the habit of striking up an acquaintance so easily with a stranger, especially in a public bar, and I did not like to force my conversation upon him, so I turned again to the barmaid.

"Your Gaiety girls were a great success with us in New York," I continued.

The stranger turned his head and regarded me with the air which one assumes to those one has not met at a tea.

"Yes!" replied the little spinster. "We heard you made quite a fuss over them in the States."

"Rather," reiterated Captain Radcliffe, turning this time squarely toward me.

"Miss Sanderson is right," I remarked, breaking the ice. "Enthusiastic houses everywhere they went and the dock crowded with friends to wave them *bon voyage*."

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"Will you join me?" he asked as naturally as if he had said it in Denver. "I am Captain Regie Radcliffe."

"With pleasure," I replied, and we exchanged our cards.

"I dare say it would be considered shocking bad form, our speaking to one another," he added seriously. "You'll forgive me, I hope. One does meet such a lot of rotters in public bars, doesn't one?"

He stood erect regarding me out of his keen eyes.

"And you are an American?" he asked.

"Yes, a New Yorker."

"I'll wager you had a bad crossing. The *Oceanic*, I believe, had the roughest voyage back in years."

"I came from Paris," I explained. "It was rough enough on the Channel."

"Oh, Paris," he replied sadly, and he smiled reminiscently. "Dear old Paris! It's been nearly ten years since I've been there. It's the most lovely place in the world." His whole manner changed as he said it.

"I live there," I remarked.

"You *live* in Paris?"

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"Yes, in the Quartier Latin—near the Luxembourg."

"My dear fellow," he said, and his eyes danced, "you're lucky. Indeed, you are. I wouldn't mind it a bit. I mean I'd rather have my little room again under the roof in the Rue Monsieur le Prince and two hundred francs a month than a pot of money in this beastly London. There's absolutely nothing to do Sundays here. It's been a wretched day, hasn't it?"

"Come now, Captain Radcliffe, you mustn't be too hard on London," put in Miss Sanderson. "I'll admit it is a bit dull and dead-and-alive Sundays, but it isn't as bad as you say, really. Come, be fair."

"I'm blessed if I see how it could be much worse," he declared. "If we were in Paris to-day there'd be plenty to do. Rather!" he drawled, raising his glass to mine.

"I've lived there for years," I said, "and I've never known many lonely hours."

"There you are," cried he. "Why, they send us to bed here at 11:30 Sundays, and even during the week one can't sup comfortably after the play; what have I done to-day?" he went on gloomily. "Got up at twelve, lunched in the

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grill room. Spent three hours running about town in a hansom, stopping, telegraphing, and telephoning to get some one to dine with me to-night and a table to dine at. Not one of my pals in town—all shooting; but I got the table—rather!" he chuckled. "I tell you I've got one good friend at the Cecil, and that's the *maître d'hôtel*—dear old Leon. Known him for years. You don't know what it means to me to find some one to talk to. It's been a hideous day—something too awful. You'll dine with me, won't you? Come, I've got a splendid table at the Cecil. They've promised us a little concert during dinner there to-night, and if we get bored why there's nothing simpler than to chuck it. But you'll come and dine anyway, won't you? Say you will," he pleaded as I hesitated.

"But my dear chap," he explained, "it will be a charity if you will. Come, it's a bargain, isn't it? I dare say the bally old concert won't be half bad."

"Why not dine with *me?*" I suggested.

"But, my dear fellow, I've got a table. You can't possibly get one. It took me hours in a hansom and a lot of bother—and I've ordered dinner for four."

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But we'll be only two!"

"Never mind. It's better always to be prepared. Some other chaps might drop in. Never can tell—splendid rule that. Ordering for four. They give you a bigger table, you know, with plenty of room. Hate to bump my knees at little ones next to pillars, where they always somehow manage to stick you."

"Then dine with me to-morrow night, and we'll call it a bargain," said I. "Tuesday I have promised to dine with an old friend of mine, the doctor, at the Cheshire Cheese, but I'm free to-morrow, and if you accept I'll dine with you to-night."

"That's fair," said the little spinster, as she smiled through the goblet she was polishing.

He grasped my hand heartily.

"You're awfully good, old chap," he said. "I was afraid you wouldn't come."

The concert was a success from a culinary point of view, a deep-sea ballad with the oysters being rendered by a stalwart gentleman wearing a camellia, followed by a breezy ditty served with the turbot, a French *Ave Maria* accompanying the *pâtés* delivered by a nervous little

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woman in a salmon satin gown with a German accent.

Regie thought it an awful bore. There were roast pheasant and the second cousin to a real sole; pink sherbet, jellied quail; all might have fared better without the death music from *Tristan und Isolde.*

The massive marble dining-room, ornate in things ponderous and glittering in electricity, was thronged with dinner parties. Here was an Indian Rajah with his suite; there a rotund financier with his maiden aunts. Farther on through the maze of jeweled necks and bare arms one caught a glimpse of some celebrated beauty, marvelously preserved, dining in silence opposite a fat little gentleman with varnished hair and four emerald rings, who had long ago eschewed the effort of conversation. Whatever else was late, the champagne was invariably ahead of time, bubbling up in the

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sea of shining glasses and springlike in temperature. Again Regie referred to the bad form of our meeting, but I impressed upon him the fact that it was a godsend to me as well.

"I know how lots of Englishmen—those Londoners who haven't been about the world—would regard it," he went on as we sat smoking over our coffee, "but we army chaps who have traveled a bit are apt to be broader about that sort of thing. So I knew you'd understand. I shall never forget how handsomely some of your naval men treated us in China; they gave us a ripping time. I'd been badly shot up carrying despatches, and had just gotten to feeling fit again when the plague struck us, the kind that takes you off like that," and he snapped his fingers. "Most of our regiment were killed off with it. Hardly a man in my mess left; we used to wager who'd go next. It's odd how I came to go down with it too. You see there was an American chap with us, one of your war-correspondents, and we became great pals. Poor Billy, he was the best sort I ever knew. Hospitals were overflowing with wounded when Billy got the plague."

"And he died?"

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"My dear fellow, I did my best to pull him through, but it was no good. He went like the rest in a few days. I took care of him myself. I couldn't let him go into that shamble of a hospital. He wasn't the sort of chap who was used much to fighting and that sort of thing. My regiment was quartered in a town we had shelled the day before. The morning after Billy died I was down with it. They gave me up. I'm telling you this, old chap, for there's an amusing incident connected with it. It isn't every chap, is it?" he continued with a laugh, "who can say he's seen his own coffin. But I did, and I've got the receipt for it too, by Jove. Got it framed. I'm not a bit clever, you see. I'm only a soldier chap. I envy those clever people who can write and sing and draw, and do things, but if I could write, by Jove, I'd write a novel about that coffin of mine. I remember waking up at daylight in a bare stone building filled with plague patients. The enemy was close on us and there was no time for ceremony. So there stood my coffin next to me. It was the only one out of thirty-three that day that wasn't filled —mine was made from old packing-boxes, and upon one of the bottom boards was stenciled in

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green letters 'Devoe's Best Paint.' Come down to Suffolk with me and I'll show you the receipt for it. I 've got it hung up in my gun-room."

"And you were in the Boer war, too," I ventured, pushing him the cigarettes.

"Rather," he replied. "I'd like to know who wasn't. But I'm not going to bore you with that. By Jove, if I was only clever I'd put a bit of that in my novel too, but I'm not."

"Captain," I began.

"Captain be hanged!" he protested. "Call me Regie if you like. I'm sick of formality—jolly well sick of it. Besides, every one calls me Regie," and he filled my glass with the bubbles of warm Spring.

"I remember one night," he continued after a pause, "I had had the good luck to be chosen to carry orders along our lines to a fort thirty-five miles away and to warn our outposts to double our pickets. The Boers had cut our telegraphic communication and were close on our line. A night attack had been planned by them, and the last orders we had telegraphed were to fire on any one approaching. There was no other way than to send a chap to warn them and the lot fell to me. The route lay over

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the veldt. You could hear a horse's hoofs for a long distance over it, and it was pitch-dark and raining. Time after time as I rode up to our outposts I was shot at by our own men. The wire obstructions bothered me too, for they often gave the signal of my approach long before I was seen. I was lucky, for only one bullet clipped my riding-boot and another went through my horse's tail. I would ride up to our men, give orders, and go on—all night riding up, giving orders, and going on until I was so done up I could hardly keep in the saddle. When I reached the fort it was daylight. My poor old horse dropped dead and I rolled off him, and I didn't remember anything until the next day."

"I'll bet they took care of you," I said.

"Rather!" he replied, as he lit a fresh cigarette. "But I was sorry for my poor old horse; he had put up a plucky fight, poor beast!"

He drew forth a wafer of a watch.

"They'll turn us out in twenty-two minutes," he said. "You know, I was awfully afraid you wouldn't come to-night."

"Nonsense, Regie," I returned. "You deserve better company. You deserve a banquet in your honor."

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The Frivol is beautifully fashioned for its purpose. From its corner in the Strand radiate half-a-dozen busy thoroughfares, like the threads leading to the center of a spider-web.

The exterior of this popular magnet of a theater suggests a refined and comfortable interior—moreover, architecturally it is in excellent taste, this exterior of gray stone. What carving there is happens casually upon its well-proportioned plain surfaces, so that there is nothing about the place to offend the eye of a gentleman. The Frivol is not a family theater, neither was it intended for the lower classes.

On either side of the entrance to the Frivol is a bar. Now these two bars are by no means as alike as two peas in a pod, altho they were built with the theater at one and the same time, as were the restaurant and the grill-room and the bachelors' "flats" above this attractive playhouse.

The right-hand bar is of a luxurious and conservative type. Some excellent copies of old portraits of bygone players hang upon its walls; dignified ivory-white paneling and scarlet leather chairs, surmounted with a crest, give a cheery touch of color. Its barmaids, too, are in keeping

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with its atmosphere. They have an air about them of duchesses assisting at a charity bazaar, and their quiet badinage to the passing stranger is refined and to the *habitué* tactful. Healthy types of Englishwomen these, of fine frame and carriage. Their tight-fitting black dresses are faultlessly cut, and they know the value of a diplomatic word of greeting to every one.

But its sister bar, tucked under the left-hand side—the windy side of the Frivol—is more in keeping with its name. It possesses like its more conservative mate a cleverly designed interior, attractive in polished greenwoods, Dutch faience, and scarlet leather chairs, cozy corners for the weary, and high-backed settles. Only it is far gayer—in better humor continually, if you will. I grew to like this side. It was like finding a rose garden in the fog. The place suggested champagne, not ale. Besides, it did one good to talk to Madge, as she laughed over silly nothings. Silly nothings are as important on blue Mondays as the pet prescriptions of the best physician. Madge's teeth were like pearls, and the promises she made vanished as merrily as the bubbles in the wine she served you. But the Englishman likes this sort of thing.

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He enjoys a guarded and orderly little chat with a pretty girl, altho to the Parisian it is incomprehensible. Romance to the Londoner is a serious business at best, involving no end of bother.

The Englishman when in his cups has a horror of losing his dignity; the Frenchman his sense to enjoy.

Had this bar existed in Chicago there would have been trouble. In the Klondike there would not have been a whole glass left in it three hours after it opened.

Yet in London (and not Paris) the barmaid is a type unto herself—a race which throughout the length and breadth of the great city is treated with gratifying respect by all classes. London is brutal, it is criminal and vicious, but it raises its hat as meekly as a well-behaved lamb before the cheerful "Good evening" of the girl behind the polished taps. She is a factor, and an important factor, in the running of this big town. The London County Council with its adamant and despotic laws as regards closing hours, closing London as promptly as a nursery and sending its children out of all public places to bed without a protest or a murmur from the latter,

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is a strange thing to see and a still stranger thing to believe when you see it done.

A most important share of the oil which regulates London is dispensed by the barmaid. It is she who so often appeases the quarrelsome, quells loud talking, settles the beginnings of foolish disputes, and sends home many a young blood bound on a spree with a chat and glass and cheery "good night," makes up her accounts with honesty and precision at the end of the day, and seems to be to all outward appearances content with a modest salary and no tips.

In London I have seen a woman knocked down by her husband in the public street in broad daylight, and no one interfered. He, no doubt, rated his wife as of less value among his possessions than his horse and dog. Among the lower classes such public horrors are of frequent occurrence. But this particular instance was not of the lower class. Thus, it is surprising to see how deferential they are to the barmaid—when she is behind the bar.

The well-appointed collection of bachelors' flats over the Frivol make it possible for one living above this gilded palace of frivolity to leave one's fireside, partake of a gay or conserv-

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THE GAIETY THEATRE

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ative glass beneath one's abode, dine, and go to the play all in the same building.

Verily the Frivol is alluringly and wonderfully made. That was precisely why it was not long before the reckless Captain Regie found himself entangled in the threads of this merry spider-web. He became an *habitué*, rarely missing a performance, and most of his days were idled away either in the gay or the conservative bar, waiting for the next performance to begin.

Regie had fallen in love—desperately in love at the Frivol with Flo. There was no better dancer in all England than this altogether fascinating girl. Nightly the Frivol rang with applause to the roof. Lithe and graceful as a butterfly was she; there was a snap and fire in her dancing which made even the oldest of blasé Londoners readjust their monocles and grunt their approbation. Upon the stage of the Frivol appeared nightly and at matinees the choicest beauties of London. It is needless to add that the stage door led to a beehive of jealousy. Puffy old gentlemen could be seen toddling in with bouquets—a little embarrassed and hugely elated at their good fortune to be counted

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among the chosen few allowed behind the scenes. This freedom doubtless "was not given," as the French say. Sleek, well-groomed youths vied with each other in gallantry; electric broughams brought others nightly to present their homage within the drafty stage entrance.

Of course, you can see all this in Paris. The steam-heated coulisses of the Folies Bergères or the Olympia present nightly the same picture. It is merely a question of infatuation and enough gold louis to carry on the hobby.

When Captain Regie Radcliffe first heard of the Frivol he was being wheeled past one of its alluring posters in his perambulator by his nurse. Being at the time occupied with his rattle and a bun, he gave but a passing grimace to the gay butterflies composing the then latest ballet upon the bill-boards. Little did he then know that the Frivol had marked him for her own.

Years had passed, during which Regie had gone to Eton, owned a polo stable of his own, graduated at Cambridge, shot over his own and the best dogs of his numerous relations, wined, dined, and rode to hounds with the swagger set,

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and swam easily in the vortex of idle London. With plenty of sovereigns any one can stem the tide with an easy stroke, tho it is a treacherous stream at best, and many a young lord has been seized with a cramp halfway across.

Regie was lucky, inasmuch as his testy uncle living in a tomb of a house in Staffordshire would have none of his nonsense.

"You're a young gambler, sir!" he would bellow at the spendthrift, "and I'll have none of it."

And Regie would remain silent studying his apoplectic relation with a coolness that was exasperating; ride his uncle's favorite filly to victory the next day, and get back to the Frivol with three hundred pounds and the old fellow's tearful forgiveness, after which Regie could be seen as usual in the front row of the Frivol nightly, gazing in rapture at the girl to whom all other women were as dandelions to roses. True, she had her failings. Flo was not always in the best of humor, but he, being impressionable and tender-hearted, forgave her, and she in return told him she loved him, a confession which exhilarated this young blood to a seventh heaven, until he entertained graver dreams of the future. Flo should leave the stage; they would have a

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Arrangement with W. Thacker & Co. London.

THEY WOULD HAVE A HOUSEBOAT ON THE THAMES

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town house in Park Lane after the wedding and a country place on the Isle of Wight and a house-boat on the Thames. He would babble on enthusiastically over such plans as these until the last guest in the dining-room had left, and the waiter stood respectfully behind his chair, waiting for his gold. Then Flo would draw on her gloves and discourage him by the sullen gleam in her gray eyes. She had seen enough of the young man of good family and the "Gaiety" girl united in marriage. The wrath of the family—all London talking—and talking about her; the divorce court and the few paltry pounds to settle the affair (a sum always overestimated in the morning papers). No, Flo was wiser than that. Besides, she knew this reckless Regie. It was better he should spend his money at the Carlton as long as it lasted, as she had helped many another lad to do. As they rose to go she would forbid him seeing her for a month. Such little dinners of discouragement as these plunged Regie in the depths of despair.

London to him became an inferno. After all, there was nothing left but the front row, where at least he could watch Flo through the entire second act and eighteen minutes of the third.

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It was maddening, and he would have been far happier if he had stayed away altogether. He often thought so as he went out with the throng into the chill street and called a hansom to take him to a lonely supper.

The stage-door habit is as catching as the measles. Hardly a gilded youth escapes. They take it as a lark. Regie took it seriously.

Enter the rival, a scoundrel with nerve, no scruples, and a larger bank account—Regie's own was dwindling.

At this point in the game Regie should have gone shooting, sat down on a cool rock, and figured out his chances together with his profit and loss. Instead he went out of his head completely. He was bound that Flo should marry him. He would wake up at night and lie for hours staring into the darkness of his apartment. Since he could not sleep there was some consolation in turning over in his mind all she had ever said to him, and there was much to remember. The summer days on the Thames, when they idled under low bridges and lunched in good spirits at some little inn hidden away among reeds and flowers. This man who had faced death and had ridden straight into the

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carnage of battle became as a child crying for a toy which he could not possess and which could never have brought him anything but ill luck and misery if he had. He grew morose, assumed a reckless air, coupled with periods of ruthless extravagance. He became afraid of himself and of her. His London—the London he knew so well and honestly hated—held him like a vise. He dared not go away, and he dared not stay. Nightly he went to the Frivol, to come away maddened by her—by her consummate grace, by the gleam in her eyes, by all that makes a pretty woman the oldest story in the world.

"My people are furious," he confessed to me one night as we sat dining together. He poured for himself half a tumbler of very old cognac and drained it. "There's the devil to pay," he went on, "but I'm going to fight on; after all, my boy, there's only one life and I'm living mine. Who the devil, who the devil," he reiterated, straightening in his chair, "cares a farthing about me anyway? When I'm dead it will be all over, but I mean to live while it lasts," and a strange, brilliant, vacant stare came into his eyes, a stare that made me shudder.

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"I'll see him damned first!" he said, smiling stiffly. "I've been honest with Flo; I love her tremendously," he laughed. "She shall have all I've got in the world, and I've got some left yet, rather! If she'll only marry me—only marry me!" he muttered, gazing absently at his plate, and his eyes filled. I tried my best to get him to listen, and for brief moments he would grow silent and agree to follow my advice.

"Regie," I said, "you're the luckiest fellow in the world, only you don't know it."

He started.

"What do you mean?" he stammered.

"I mean precisely what I say. You don't seem to realize that there are thousands of men in London who would be grateful to be in your shoes."

"I don't understand," he said shakily. "I don't understand."

"I mean to say Flo has refused you. That was rather white in Flo. She has never persecuted you, neither has she ever encouraged you. What bad half-hours you have had, you have brought upon yourself. It seems to me then that Flo has more good qualities than you have been able to appreciate."

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He looked at me in a dazed sort of way. His cheek-bones flushed.

"You seem to *know*," he said, paling suddenly with suppressed anger. "You have never met Miss Crofton?"

"Not until yesterday," I returned quietly.

"You—you have met her?" he began savagely.

"Yes, in a purely professional way, I assure you. I wrote asking for an interview, as any writer might ask for a chat upon her stage career."

"And did she grant it?" he sneered.

"Certainly; I found her charming." I saw the color mount again, but he said nothing, only stared—stared at me bitterly.

"Come, my boy," I said, "we are two not going to quarrel, are we?"

"Did she speak of me?" he asked huskily, after a pause.

"Yes."

"Of her own accord?"

"Yes, quite of her own accord."

"What did she say—you'll not lie to me, will you, old chap—what did she say?"

"She said you were a thoroughbred."

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His eyes brightened, and as suddenly he rose from the table and brought his fist down upon the damask cloth, upsetting his glass.

"Sit down!" I said, "I have not finished yet."

"I am going," he said tensely, his white hand gripping the back of his chair.

"Sit down!" I commanded. But he strode past me to the coat-room, and before I could reach him he was gone.

Captain Reginald Radcliffe again had entered the field of battle.

Regie did not call a hansom. He strode on past the porter with his whistle and out into the night. He kept on up the Strand. All this Regie told me the next day. The Frivol was not yet out. Its lights beamed forth, glistening on the wet tops of the waiting vehicles. Regie knew that his seat was waiting for him in the front row, but somehow it did not tempt him to enter. He looked at his watch. In less than half an hour the play would be out. Flo was then either dressing or had gone. He seemed a little lightheaded and, clench them as he would, his hands, buried deep in the pockets of his great-

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coat, trembled as with the palsy. Suddenly he turned and retraced his steps rapidly to the conservative bar. He was deathly pale as he entered, and one of the duchesses who served him inquired in a motherly way if he was ill.

"Been inside?" she asked, cheerily.

Regie shook his head.

"I'm jolly well sick of it," was all he said.

He paid his bill and made his way into the street. He was going to see Flo. His hands were like ice. A dozen times he grasped the gloves in his pocket and determined to put them on, but he was too nervous to take the trouble.

He would see her and she would tell him plainly yes or no. But he would know—and she should not refuse him.

His rapid pace had brought him to a more fashionable quarter of London almost before he was aware of it. Five minutes later he rang the bell of Flo's apartment.

No answer.

He stood in the dull light of the hallway, trembling, undecided what to do. Flo was evidently supping after the theater, with whom and where he did not know. His hands grew hot

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and the blood welled to the back of his ears. Then suddenly he turned and wrenched at the knob of the door and to his surprise found it slightly ajar.

"Flo!" he called.

No answer.

Cautiously he entered and closed the door behind him.

"Flo!" he cried brokenly.

A canary bird in the dark dining-room fluttered frightened in its cage. He groped his way through the boudoir, stumbling against a Louis XVI. table, crashing its contents to the floor. Beyond, in the salon, a coal fire smoldered. He stirred it into a gentle blaze and sank into an easy-chair beside it.

An hour—two hours passed, and still Flo did not return. Half an hour more dragged on. The minutes now became interminable. He started up under the strain. Something had occurred to him. It confronted him like a nightmare—the fact that he had entered without permission. It was criminal, and he knew it.

"Like a housebreaker—a common thief," he said to himself.

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He got up, went back to the door, and tried to open it.

There was something in the catch he could not solve, tho he would have given all he possessed in the world for its secret that led to freedom.

After fussing with it hopelessly, he leaned against the wall, the cold sweat starting from his forehead to the palms of his hands.

He tried the lock again, but it was useless. He groped his way back into the salon shivering. Time after time as he waited in the chair counting the minutes, he fought to control himself from screaming in a nervous frenzy. Then a depression stole over him, the like of which he had never known before.

"My people," he kept repeating to himself, "my people—I've run my race."

Suddenly he heard the rattle of a latch-key. The door opened and Flo came in.

She was drunk.

All this Regie told me the next day, with every particle of frenzy gone out of him.

"Old chap," he said, gazing at me coolly as he drew up two easy-chairs in the cozy bar out of hearing of the little spinster, "I've made a

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fool of myself. I could have stood anything but that. It was horrible. I shall never see Flo again."

"And you're happy?" I asked.

He straightened and put donw his glass. "Rather," said he.



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CHAPTER III

In Which I See the End of the Cock and Bell

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CHAPTER III

In Which I See the End of the Cock and Bell



"RRID night, sir!" muttered cabby between his teeth and my bob as he left me at the Cheshire Cheese, where I had promised to dine with my old friend, the doctor.

I found my way out of the thrash of rain into Wine Office Court—a narrow ill-lit alley which, in the flickering light of a gas-jet signaling the entrance to Dr. Johnson's favorite tavern, made the low, ancient houses that had found their lot cast in this melancholy alley appear like a flat or two of old scenery stored in the rear of a stage. The flickering gas-jet sent its light over some freshly strewn

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sand as a further guide to the wayfarer—a trail which led into the famous snuggery past the tap-room and into a square, low-ceiled tavern glowing with light and redolent of good cooking and warmed by an old-fashioned grate of gleaming coals.

Here, by appointment, in that very corner, aye upon the very bench where the goodly Johnson had spent so much of his life, I found my friend, the doctor, waiting for me. He had saved me a seat beside him, for the room was already crowded. It was interesting to note too, as one cast one's eyes at one's neighbors, that for the most part there was assembled here a varied collection of strangers, savants, ladies, merchants, lawyers, physicians, and Bohemians, all of whom had deposited their dripping umbrellas in a common rack and had settled themselves to dine.

Upstairs, in a box of a kitchen, pounds of green garden peas were simmering in their steam upon the ancient grill. Occasionally a sizzling, sputtering flare sent a ruddy light dancing among the hanging pots and pans as some succulent chop was whisked from the fire or some juicy roast withdrawn for a final basting.

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Sausages hissed in their fat, mealy potatoes burst their jackets or tumbled restlessly as they boiled. Fresh orders were shouted up to the cook by the two waiters for more of the lark and kidney-pie, or another toasted cheese.

In the tap-room were three talkative barmaids, each as busy at their polished taps as a pilot at his wheel. The ale they sent into the crowded room was mellow and still, the kind which warms the blood, gives courage to the soul, and makes one kinder to one's enemies.

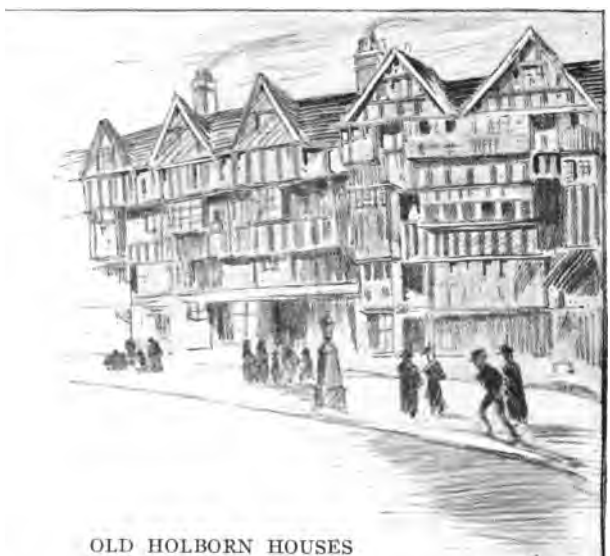
You would like the young doctor. No crabbed practitioner is he, ascetic and grim, but one of those clear-eyed, manly Englishmen of thirty, tall enough to be a dragoon and as modest as a schoolboy.

Over our sausages and ale he told me much of these old London taverns, and of the famous inns, the life of which time has at last obliterated.

Inns such as Gray's Inn and Staple Inn have their quiet courtyards hidden in the vortex of busy London. The rankling half-timbered façade of Staple Inn stands out in odd contrast among the modern business buildings along Holborn. Its gabled windows have looked

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down upon the life of centuries. The rabble following those fine ladies and unfortunate gentlemen condemned to the gibbet has swept past them through years of peace and bloody history.



OLD HOLBORN HOUSES

This old edifice has survived to stand in line at last with modern London. There is about its quiet and sedate quadrangles almost an uncanny silence, and its old halls seem to be asleep, and yet around and about this old inn sweeps by the uproar of the city.

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It lies like a rock in the torrent, fostering its little garden-plot of green as a mountain boulder protects a patch of moss. It is difficult to believe that these old inns with their scholarly dignity were ever glowing in good cheer. They made in their best days a successful attempt at walks and gardens, gay in flowers, giving to their *habitués* a home as peaceful as tho it were in the country, and yet from all accounts they harbored the must and dust of generations of tenants until their blinking windows gazed out dull-eyed, their floors sagged, their timbered ceilings became bent, like the backs of very old men, and their settled walls provided a paradise for scurrying rats. These patched and ragged old veterans harbored in their prime the wit, the philosopher, and the dandy, and in their old age they served as a sort of repository for the crabbed practitioner, the unknown clerk, and various gentlemen who never altered their abode or the precise habit of their daily life from their rising to their going to bed.

Dickens, speaking of one of those old mansions now rented in rooms, said: "It is let off in sets of chambers now, and in those shrunken fragments of its greatness, lawyers lie like mag-

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gots in nuts." And of Symonds' Inn he tells us that it was "a little, pale, wall-eyed, wobegone inn, like a large dust-bin of two compartments and a sifter."



LA BELLE SAUVAGE

Far different must have been the old coaching, inns, those genial hostelries which afforded comfort to man and beast at Whit Cheer, or at La Belle Sauvage, on Ludgate Hill, with its low

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galleries and court in a hubbub over the arrival of the fat little coach with its passengers inside, on its roof, and in a sort of safety cradle behind. How grateful an inn La Belle Sauvage must have been to these passengers cramped and chilled after going miles over muddy roads! Old coaching-inns such as those fairly glowed in romance and adventure; the highwayman holding up the fair lady with his pistol at the temple of her lord were common episodes in those days. Gossip, raillery, and good cheer enlivened the chimney corner. Crackling fires and old wines welcomed the stranger, the prince and pauper, fine ladies and young scamps, the soldier of fortune, the gentleman who lived by his sword, and the rake who lived by his cards. Buxom maids, hostlers, fiddlers, and dogs all made up the motley collection in this famous refuge. What generous tables of polished mahogany gleamed in candles and old silver and groaned with everything good to eat the land possessed; what quaint bedrooms were squeezed up under the timbered gables and high-post bedsteads whose sheets were warmed and scented with lavender for the tired traveler!

The tap-room of the Cheshire Cheese had

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grown noisy and dim with pipe-smoke when the doctor and I strolled into it after dinner. Now and then the dingy door leading into the rain-swept alley without opened to admit a late guest and his dripping umbrella. This little room, undersized as it was, dispensed a mighty quantity of ale and spirits. It was even busier than its smoky comrade upstairs, the kitchen.

The doctor and I had edged our way to the bar when I felt a grip upon my arm, and I looked up into a genial smug face, half-hidden by the turned-up collar of a mackintosh and the turned-down brim of a gray felt hat. Then the owner of the hat turned up the dripping brim, two merry blue eyes looked into mine, and a familiar voice bellowed:

"Well, I be hanged!"

If the man whose hand clasped my own in a hearty grip had dropped from the sky into this old London tavern, I could not have been taken more by surprise.

It was Jimmy Norris from San Francisco—Jimmy who at thirty-eight had won the confidence of half-a-dozen shrewd millionaires in exchange for his level head in the solid handling

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of other people's money, his generous personality winning for him a legion of friends halfway around the world.

I have never known his equal. He has the secret of life—to keep happy and to keep every one who has had the good fortune to come under the spell of his sunny personality happy about him.

Jim's stories are celebrated from the Atlantic to the Pacific. They bubble out of him, inexhaustible as a mountain spring. He has the keenest sense of humor of any man I ever knew, and I doubt if he has an enemy in the wide world.

"Been here a month," he went on enthusiastically. "Biggest scheme I ever handled—going to build a railroad down in the land where the nuts come from. It'll be a corker. Besides a few electric cranes for Japan," he chuckled. "Just back from Yokohama — came bang through to London—glad to meet you, Doctor. It's luck to find you two fellows here." His smug face was wreathed in smiles now. "Nasty night, eh, boys? but she'll clear up. Yes, sir-r-r, we'll have blue sky to-morrow. Just been talking to an old sea-dog at the Blue Posts. He's

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the skipper of a sixty-foot schooner; wind going to shift to northwest, and he's off at daylight bound for France with a load of coal," and Jim shook hands with the barmaid.

"Now, Ada," he said, "when you can take a siesta from the main pipe connecting the 'bitter' you know we'll be obliged to you for three dry martinis. Haven't forgotten how I told you to make them, have you?"

"Let's see—old Tom, vermouth," she repeated.

"And—and?" coaxed Jimmy.

"A dash of bitters," added the girl with a laugh.

"Right you are—go up head."

"It's ducky to see you back in London, Mr. Norris," said the barmaid as she shook the concoction with a will. "You 'aven't quite forgotten us, 'ave you?"

"How could I ever forget you, Ada?" returned the man who dealt in electric cranes and railroads.

At this sally the girl pinned half of her bunch of violets—the one touch of color upon her tight-fitting black bodice—in Jim's buttonhole with an air of satisfaction.

"There, my word, but that does make a gen-

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tleman look smarter, doesn't it?" she nodded, as she arranged the other half of the bunch in her bodice.

Jim is the sort of fellow who can stay up four nights and look fresher for it the fifth. As he stood there talking to the doctor, immaculate in a freshly valeted suit of gray tweed, I noticed his stocky, well-made frame and the breadth of his shoulders.

Suddenly the man of steel cranes and railroads became silent, twirling slowly the stem of his glass between his thumb and forefinger.

"Boys," he said seriously, "both of you have got to come along with me to-night. I'm in hard luck."

"Hard luck? What's up?" we exclaimed.

"I'm a homeless waif," he returned with smiling dignity.

"Yes, you look it," I retorted.

"Fact, just the same," replied Jim, and he knit his sunburnt brow.

"Come, Jimmy, out with it," I said, "what's happened?"

"Well, the fact is," and a savage light crept into his blue eyes, "the fact is, I'm going to be turned out of my hotel."

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ONE OF THE OLD INNS

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"*You* out of your hotel, nonsense!" we cried. "Have you broken the glassware or insulted the proprietor? Jim, you're joking." I looked at him curiously, for he really seemed in earnest.

"No more roof for little Willie by the morning," said he, and he raised his glass with a sigh.

"Do you really mean to say you're actually turned out of your hotel?" questioned the doctor. "Gad, 'pon my word, that *is* rather steep, isn't it? Mind you, if there's any trouble," drawled the doctor in his quiet voice, which rose to a higher key as he slowly grasped the situation. "Where is the bally proprietor, anyway?" he cried. The doctor had straightened to his full height now, his clear brown eyes snapping with interest. "I shouldn't mind having a word with him myself. He wouldn't dare try that game on an Englishman, I'll wager you. I'm blessed if they're not getting to be something too awful in London lately. I'll be blessed, my dear fellow, if I wouldn't give him a jolly good lesson. Rather!"

"Benson," said Jim, turning to the bar boy with a gleam in his eyes that meant business, "call me a hansom."

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"Very good, sir!" said the boy, and he hurried after one in Fleet Street.

"Come, Doctor, we'll all three get into a sea-going hack and you'll see for yourselves."

"We're with you," we cried.

"Hansom, sir," announced Benson, slapping the drip from his collar. We rushed out and climbed in, Jim muttering some instructions to the cabby as we went swaying off into the downpour.

I wondered what my cabby who called it a "'orrid night" was saying of it now.

The sky hung like a black pall behind the gloomy buildings, a pall rent at intervals by streaks of jagged lightning and crashing thunder; the rain continued to thrash down upon the city in sheets, leaking through the closed hansom. It was often difficult for the wiry little horse to keep upon his feet, but he jogged bravely on.

Occasionally I caught a glimpse of Jimmy's smug countenance illumined as he puffed at his cigar. I thought once or twice I detected a grim smile wrinkling the corners of his eyes, and I remember nudging the doctor, who, like myself, had been unusually silent during the drive,

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expecting to have plenty of talking to do upon our arrival at Jim's ill-mannered hostelry.

Was it after all only a joke?

Had Jim coaxed us out this infernal night on a wild-goose chase after a landlord who did not exist?

Jimmy's grim smile was suspicious. I had begun to feel sure we would bring up short in a few moments past some fashionable corner to a smart hotel, a blazing fire, and a glass, when our hansom, taking a dark street, stopped with a jolt in front of an ancient low-roofed structure lightless and to all appearances deserted.

"We've arrived," announced James. "Follow me."

We got out and rushed for a sheltering eave while Jimmy knocked at an ancient door.

Above us hung an old signboard creaking mournfully as it swayed in the storm.

"Gad!" exclaimed the doctor, peering up at the swinging board, "it's the Cock and Bell."

A shuffling sound of footsteps and a wavering light now came near us in response to Jim's sharp knocking, and the voice of an old man called, "Who's there?"

"That you, Briggs?" cried Jim.

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"Yes, sor."

A heavy bolt shot back and the door was cautiously opened by an old man-servant. A sudden gust of wind snuffed out the candle he held, and we entered a narrow hallway in the dark.

"Told you I was going to be turned out," remarked Jim drily over the sputtering flare of Briggs' now relighted candle. "The Cock and Bell is up at auction in the morning. I'm the last guest. I knew you fellows wouldn't come if I told you the truth. I couldn't stand coming back here alone. I felt like a man forced to spend a night in a graveyard. Why not sit up and cheer up the old place in its last hours?"

He opened the door of a spacious low-ceiled room choked with fine old mahogany.

"Look in there if you're interested in old furniture. There's enough in there to furnish a small museum, and all of it genuine."

Chippendale cellarettes were ranged next to shining tables, old sideboards, and carved chairs, while stacks of rich old silver, platoons of decanters, and baskets of spoons glittered among bootjacks and warming-pans.

"Every mother's son of them is going under the hammer in the morning," growled Jimmy.

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"Isn't it a shame? Ground sold. The Cock and Bell to be torn down. Horror of a new apartment going up. Lift, steam heat, and electric lights for the world and his wife."

"It's enough to make your blood boil when you think of its ignominious end after all the good cheer this old tavern has afforded for generations."



"You should have seen it this morning," he went on. "Cook choked up and wept so he couldn't cook the breakfast, and half-a-dozen old fellows, some of whom have made this their home for forty years, left the breakfast-room with dim eyes and a heavy heart."

"Letters for you, sor," interrupted Briggs, and he handed Jim three cablegrams and a packet of mail. We forgot all about Jimmy's ruse as we thought of the end of the Cock and Bell.

We followed the faithful Briggs into the old lounging-room in the rear cleared of everything

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except a few well-worn leather-covered arm-chairs and a bare round table.

The shadeless windows blinked out into the night. Briggs thrust three candles into the necks of as many empty bottles—all the candlesticks being ticketed with the rest of the effects. Then he went in search of an old packing-box, broke it up, and soon had a crackling blaze licking up the chimney.

He busied himself about our comfort noiselessly. He was a very feeble and a very old man, whose deep-set, kindly eyes had seen much in their day. Old fogies and old port need a deal of waiting on. It is even rumored that he had loaned money to a duke, and had comforted many a ruined spendthrift with tact and fatherly advice.

Now he was the only one left, and his voice as he spoke to Jim had an awed note in it as if there had been a murder in the house.

"Anything to drink left, Briggs?" inquired Jim.

"I'll go and see, sor."

"And Briggs, while you're about it, bring some cigars. We're none of us sleepy."

The doctor and I felt our damp clothes as

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we stood steaming before the fire and wished Briggs luck on his trip to the cellar.

Presently he came shuffling back with six glasses of varied dimensions and a small brown keg.

Out of the keg he dribbled apologetically just five glasses of Benedictine.

"There be the last drop of liquor in the old house," he said with a quaver in his voice. "It's a sorry hending, sors, a sorry hending."

The doctor, who had pulled up a warm arm-chair and now sat stretching his long legs before the blaze, reached for his glass. As he did so a sudden flash of lightning and a cracking boom of thunder set the old-fashioned square panes in the windows to shivering.

"Briggs, don't tell us there are no cigars," groaned Jim. "We need them badly."

"I've searched the 'ouse, sor. It's too bad."

He paused for a moment and passed his shriveled hand through his sparse gray hair.

"There may be one or two in the little cupboard," said he.

He returned in a few moments with a box in which lay six dried-up Havanas.

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"They belonged to Jeemes, the cook, sor," he explained.

And then it occurred to us simultaneously that we were the Cock and Bell's last guests and the least entitled to be so.

In one corner of the hall stood a partitioned rack which until that morning had held the keys, slippers, mail, candlesticks, and prayer-books of the *habitués* of this ancient tavern, morning prayers being a ceremony which many of these old fellows, gouty with port, crawled down to in the morning as a sort of penance for being carried up the winding stairs in the early dawn in their cups. It is not to be wondered at then that the end of the Cock and Bell was like the breaking up of a family, and that blustering, testy old Billy Chitterdon had wept with the fine old gentlemen who had stayed to the end.

Even short, stubby, idle Mr. Dodson had made a little speech, a task which he had risen to shakily upon his gouty legs and sat down in the middle of, unable to continue.

Whereas that rotund and dull James Worthington, always immaculate in a red plush vest of the color of old Burgundy, embellished with

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pearl buttons and purchased in Paris in the early seventies, had said simply, wiping his watery blue eyes:

"I am homeless, gentlemen; the Cock and Bell has been a home to me for over thirty years, and I dare say I am now too old to change. I have a horror of new places and new ways." And then, bursting forth in a tirade against the march of so-called modern progress which mowed down such venerable landmarks as the Cock and Bell until he grew purple with rage, he went stamping upstairs for a last look at his old room, swearing like a pirate.

Dawn came. The fire slumbered in its embers.

The back room had grown chilly. The five glasses of Benedictine had long since been drained to their oily sides and the six Havanas slowly consumed to their bitter ends, stumps which were stubbornly fostered at the point of our penknives.

"And you, Briggs," I said to the old servant, "where are you going?"

The old man looked up and quietly said:

"To Mr. Worthington, sir, in Kent. He will

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go back to the house in which Sir James, his father, lived. He's dead, sir, is Sir James; his 'oss fell on him, sir, a-huntin'."

The old man followed us respectfully through the chill hallway to the door.

"I'll wire you where to send my luggage, Briggs," said Jimmy, and he passed out of the Cock and Bell.

The doctor was about to follow at his heels when I stepped in front of him and across the threshold.

"Before you, my boy," I protested. "If there is to be a last guest at the Cock and Bell it shall be you. It is your right. You are an Englishman."

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CHAPTER IV

The House of Savoy

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CHAPTER IV



The House of Savoy

THE fifteen flunkies gave a parting word to one another in *sotto voce*, drew on their white cotton gloves, and saw that their powdered wigs were secure. This done, they distributed themselves in attendance over the red velvet carpet at the top of the broad flight of steps descending to a foyer that would have graced the palace of a king.

Little lights began to glow up hidden in the cornice of this spacious room, whose dignified panels were hung with copies of the famous portraits of Reynolds and Gainsborough. Over the floor of this foyer were grouped lounges and dainty chairs upholstered in pale apple green and drawn up to smoking-tables.

At the end of this foyer, screened by transparent glass, lay a jewel-box of a dining-room now glowing in shaded candles and fragrant with roses.

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Coming down to it through the foyer you discover that the gilded ceiling of this jewel-box is low and that its walls and supporting pillars are as rich in color as scarlet morocco, and that its floor is covered with tables spotless in damask and glittering in silver and glass.

Should your inquiry lead you to a more microscopic investigation, you would discover that the silver upon these tables is as bright as if it had been displayed to you in its case at the silversmith's and that each glass is as immaculate as a bubble.

All this I have attempted to describe is only the setting of the stage whereon the farce, or comedy, or tragedy, as you will, is to be in a few minutes enacted.

It is the stage-setting of a master hand, costing an outrageous sum, and only possible in a city of limitless wealth and luxury. Then you suddenly remember as you gaze back through its vista of jewel-box and foyer—past the fifteen bewigged flunkies and into the dignified, restfully lighted marble hall, and out at last to the covered rubber-paved court, with its massive low arch spanning the ever-arriving automobiles and hansoms, and its keystone surmounted with a

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golden statue—that the modern house of Savoy is not after all an historical palace, or some buttressed and moated stronghold, whose halls have held the life of a gay court or echoed with the rasp of rapier and clash of halberd. For it is catalogued among the world's institutions under the plebeian word "hotel."

But it is far more than that. It is, as I have said, an institution. Just as is its neighboring caravansary, the Cecil, it is a city in itself. Much less than a score of years ago the best of London's hotels were gloomy affairs, utterly devoid of all modern comfort—gloomy hallways, morgue-like breakfast-rooms, and depressing old bedrooms, whose only excuse for existing seemed to be based upon the fact that they had always been so and never would be any different. To-day all fashionable and intellectual London pours in a daily and nightly stream to live or to lunch, dine, or sup in these modern institutions.

If you would see the life of London, its wealth, its fashion, its nobility, and its intellect, you may do so at your ease over your coffee and cigar in this house of Savoy. One wonders if fashion entertains in its own home any more.

But to return to the foyer.

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A quiet little man with alert eyes is giving a final sweeping glance to the setting of the stage. He raises his eyes to a waiter. One of the ventilators in the ceiling of the foyer is not working smoothly; a match-safe upon the third table from him has not been properly polished, and a chair is out of place. These attended to, he leaves the stage by way of a hinged panel and disappears into the depths of another world, a veritable city below stairs which makes all this perfection above it possible.



The curtain has rung up. It is the hour to dine. The flunkies' arms are being laden with sticks, coats, and hats, and the maids in an adjoining room, as exquisitely refined in its appointments as the boudoir of a princess, are busy with hats, veils, and opera cloaks. For here no woman may enter with her hat on.

Wealth and Beauty have just arrived. Wealth wears a monocle and is nearly bald, but Beauty

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is radiant as the waiting-maid slips her furs from her smooth white shoulders.

Enter fat Hypocrisy, suavely, plausibly, with his bearded chin held high, and a prim family like a brood of young pheasants following at his patent-leather heels.

Enter Idleness, rotund and clean-shaven. Enter a healthy band of rugged old age (seven of these), who have seen service in war, who have known hell in various mundane phases, and have stood by and done their duty like men. It is quite a large dinner party. They are so modest, these fine old gentlemen, so gentle withal, with a certain boyish gallantry toward the women with them. One of these is the niece of an emperor, another the lady of a lord, the pale little woman by her side the wife of a famous general.

Enter casually the cad before the savant, the lawyer behind the money-lender. Forward moves the procession, the adventuress, the conservative mother, and the smiling débutante. Enter the lean diplomat, faultless in attire, selecting a cigarette from a thin gold case as he walks.

Enter Avarice, his pudgy white hands ringed

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with jewels, an Englishwoman upon his fat arm listening bravely to his nasal accent:

"Rand is firm. Vest Coast veak, my dear," I hear him say; "but dot doesn't matter, my dear; don't vorry, to-morrow ve vill see—ve vill see."

Enter a young girl, fresh as the rose in her blue corsage, and as pure, with a healthy young giant who led a charge once that all England is yet thanking him for.

Enter three *blasé* youths yawning and fumbling with their coat checks.

Enter now a fresh flock of bare arms and jeweled necks and white-waistcoated men. Stiffly and formally they search the jewel-box and find their waiting tables.

Here, too, you find your own.

The room hums with the chat of those who are dining, but their conversation is not animated. The air is not vibrant with that exuberant gaiety one is accustomed to in a Parisian restaurant.

These healthy, staid Anglo-Saxons are always so eminently respectable; their reserve is amazing.

Neither does the English beauty grow on

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every family tree. Many are severely masculine and walk with as firm a tread as men, strong-limbed and strong-featured. Others seem to have inherited a reserved shyness, especially before men whom they have been born to regard as their superiors.

An alert, swarthy little man and a Parisienne now enter. Ah, yes! their table has been kept for them. It is refreshing to see her. She is so alive, so exquisitely made, and so purely feminine. They are seated now, and she is explaining to him something of no importance, but it is the way she says it which is so charming. Her jeweled hands, accenting every word, flash like two rare butterflies in the sun, she with her olive skin, her brilliant eyes, a touch of rouge neatly applied to her roguish lips, and her shining hair resplendent in ripples of gold. One white hand flutters for a second and remains still, clasping her drooping string of pearls.

"She is artificial," you say. Yes, but her artifice has been brought to such a *finesse* that it has become as genuine as her temperament. There is nothing artificial about *that*, I can assure you. The Englishwoman lacks her charm, her "allure." To the Englishwoman the public

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dinner is always a function. They seem conscious of being in a public place. "One can never be too careful when one is in evidence," they agree.

Parisians are not conscious of this feeling of publicity; they live without public censure or restraint, with absolute freedom and independence. Life among them is too well understood to be otherwise. They make love to each other, and discuss their most intimate secrets, when practically touching elbows with the stranger at the adjoining table. The "rallonge," that practical little board which when added to your table makes it possible for you to dine by the side of Madame or Mademoiselle, is a wide enough bridge to insure that etiquette which every Parisienne understands so thoroughly in the city of Liberté, Egalité, and Fraternité.

I have noticed, too, that it is a common custom among Englishwomen to stare, even to raising a pair of lorgnettes to obtain a more positive focus on the stranger, as if they said: "Who is that most extraordinary person?"

Parisians regard this as the height of ill-breeding. But it must be said fairly that this custom does not exist among Englishmen. If their

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selfishness and inborn sense of superiority over other nations prompt them to look after their own comfort first, they are likewise extremely reticent in appearing conspicuous, whereas the Frenchman—the Parisian, I mean—is in nine cases out of ten a *poseur*. The other tenth are as good fellows as good Englishmen are, or any other thoroughbred the world over. It is the Frenchwoman who has inherited the lion's share of those qualities known as sterling, and it is she who keeps France on her feet.

Warmed by good food and wine, the jewel-box of a dining-room has become more animated. An honorable M.P., just over an attack of gout, has waddled in late with an intolerant old barrister. Having both seated themselves goutily at the table reserved for them, the honorable M.P. wipes his eye-glasses and begins methodically to study the wine list. This is a delicate matter with him, for he knows he must pay the fiddler to-morrow if he should dine unwisely to-night.

The wine list is in itself a study—a critical essay upon vintages. "List" is much too ordinary a word for this serious catalogue that supplies good cheer to the house of Savoy.

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It is surprising how smoothly runs the serving of the various dinners about you, including your own. From the fifteen bewigged flunkies in knee-breeches to the humblest waiter, you have met with nothing but instant attention and the quiet civility of perfectly trained servants. Summon the wrong man, turn your head and raise your eyes to the nearest one in waiting who catches your glance, and your slightest wish is performed noiselessly, cheerfully, and with despatch.

There is, you discover, not an Englishman among them. They are all Austrians, Germans, or Hungarians.

Thus has the secret of serving modern fashionable London been solved.

On the other side of the glass doors screening the brilliant dining-room, a red-coated band is throbbing through a waltz—more Hungarians, you are led to believe, but here you are mistaken, for only the cymbalist with his flying hammers is from the land of the Magyars. The rest are from sunny Italy and beyond. I knew the cymbalist the moment I caught sight of him, —fat, swarthy old Bela. He and I have gone about Budapest nights together, hunting up

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some old friend of his to play for us. And we would perhaps find him in the early hours of the morning in some dingy box of a café hidden like a rabbit burrow beneath the street. Here with the rest of his band he was still playing for the very love of playing, and then he would play for us until all three of us would go in search of another old friend of Bela's, and having found him perhaps covering up his cymballum for the night, or rather the morning, he would, to convince us of the joy of such an impromptu meeting, play for us until dawn.

So you had better believe that I was glad to see old Bela, that hospitable gipsy with the skill of a virtuoso and the heart of a child. And at the end of the throbbing waltz he had grasped my hand heartily and wrung it as his fat countenance relaxed into a smile; what he said was in Hungarian, but it meant that he was happy.

I happened to express in a casual way a wish to this good old gipsy to go behind the scenes of this stage and its fashionable world.

"Then you must go below; there is another city down there," he said pointing to the floor. "Come," he continued, after a moment's thought, "I will present you to the one in charge

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of every detail. He is a Hungarian, too. He will show you all when he knows that you know Budapest and love our people."

"Ah!" he cried, turning, for a familiar voice in Hungarian caught his ear, and as I looked up I saw by his side the alert little man who had given the final touches to the setting of the stage. He bowed pleasantly and extended his hand. Five minutes later I followed him through the hinged panel and stood on the threshold of another world. The glittering throng in foyer and jewel-box had vanished as completely as a fairy scene behind the curtain. On we went down a narrow iron stairway, to the right and to the left. Suddenly we emerged into a spacious room of savory smells and polished steel ranges, of shining batteries of copper saucepans and a miniature army of white-capped cooks. The air was alive with the French language—all the signs were in French; the great kitchen as busy as a stock-exchange. Every space we passed through this magic underground city was full of interesting things, all of which the alert little man leading me showed me the tops, bottoms, and sides of. Here cleanliness and system went hand in hand. As for the

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system, it would have interested a general who was planning a campaign. Here, too, next to this big kitchen that labored for the jewel-box, was a less spacious one whose sole duty it was to supply extra creations for the jewel-box's neighbor, the Café Parisien, with its open grill.

Further on were suites of culinary apartments; the walls of the one we have just entered flanked by refrigerators through whose glass doors I see reposing a chosen lot of cutlets, chateaubriands, and filets, each as carefully placed upon its glass shelf as a rare coin in the collection of a connoisseur. In an adjoining library dozens upon dozens of ducks, tender chickens from France, woodcock, quail, and pheasants were in waiting in their right temperatures. Rushed as each department was, I rarely heard an order given. This vast army of cooks and assistants worked silently. Here, at least, too many cooks did not spoil the broth. Suddenly from the ceiling above me a stentorian voice shouted through a megaphone an order for two young ducks. It was the voice of a chief cook three hundred feet away in the big kitchen. Instantly the librarian opened a glass case and sent them post-haste to the chef's right hand.

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"That megaphone saves us time," quietly remarked the alert little man at my elbow.

He stopped as we passed on, and drew my attention to a row of busy little machines, steaming and clicking. As he did so an egg rose from the machine nearest me and tumbled into a wire tray. It had been boiled automatically in three minutes and eighteen seconds, so the pointer in the graduated scale announced. Out popped another from the fifth machine along the line, a picnic egg this time, destined to be sliced in a salad.

Further on was a room in which a clever Frenchman did nothing all day long but make candy roses and automobiles. In a near-by atelier another Parisian, a sculptor this time, was busily occupied in carving with mallet and chisel beasts, birds, and fishes out of solid blocks of ice to lend enchantment to pink ices. Beyond was a sugary workshop for tarts, candies, fruit glacés, and pastry for patês. Again we stopped before an invention, a series of dumb-waiters, their shelves heated by electricity. These were used solely for giving service to suites and bedrooms. Upon pushing a button each little dumb-waiter with its charge sped up

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to the floor desired, announced its arrival by an illuminated sign, added that it was coming down, empty or full, or had been sent on a false alarm, and advertised its arrival upon reaching the bottom.

And now an iron door shut out the realms of things cold, hot, or steaming. The room we had entered pulsated with the mighty force of a score of giant dynamos controlled by a white marble switchboard shining in brass levers. Again the language about one had changed as we crossed the threshold of the iron doorway, for these bare-armed electricians in charge of the whizzing dynamos were all Englishmen. In two adjoining antechambers I peered down into the depths of two artesian wells and shivered when I realized that their bottoms lay five hundred and ninety feet below. From their great depths came water as pure as a mountain spring.

On we went, now entering a whole factory for the manufacture of artificial ice in blocks of all sizes down to bushel-baskets full of tiny cubes to accompany the pats of butter with one's morning coffee and roll. Another series of iron stairs like those in the engine-room of an

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ocean liner brought us to a tropical temperature and a line of mammoth boilers. Here but one man was in attendance, the boilers being stoked automatically by means of an ingenious electric crane which weighed, and reported as well, every pound of coal it carried. A neighboring passageway held a square box with a glass front. "This," explained my companion, "tells instantly the precise temperature of every working room." Within a radius of this region were machine-shops and others for the repairing of electric fixtures, locks, silverware, and furniture. All ran like clockwork; so perfect was their organization that a handle that had come off a bureau drawer in my bedroom was discovered and repaired within two hours without my ordering it done.

Another city now came dimly into view, a subterranean village of rare vintages and some priceless wines, with a whole tramway service, like that in a mine, for getting them from the most remote corners where they slumbered swathed in dust and cobwebs, and speeding them on their way up to the jewel-box and into the interior of the connoisseur.

Look back upon this stupendous and perfect

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installation, this gigantic house of Savoy with its exquisite suites and rooms furnished by an artist (a decorator and an architect) with brains; its mosaic bathrooms fitted with every comfort known to human flesh; its whole ensemble from roof to cellar in modern perfection, and figure in your mind's eye if you can what it cost. That was precisely the question which I asked the alert little man whose heels I had been following rapidly for the space of two hours.

"Ten millions of your American dollars," he said, as he opened the hinged panel again leading to the stage. "And we are paying a good dividend at that."

The jewel-box was deserted except for the waiters who were laying fresh covers for the supper tables that will be in demand after the play. So great was the expected demand that the little tables overflowed into the foyer. And again I understood the need of these great hotels, and again the flunkies, again the procession entering "to feed again, tho full," to see and be seen. They swept in in gay little groups to this supper after the play, and again came the chatter and the popping of corks and the serving of things steaming, sizzling, and savory. Dishes

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Arrangement with W. Thacker & Co., London. [Drawn by Frank Reynolds.]

"TO FEED AGAIN, THO' FULL"

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that were calculated to a minute at dinner were now served to the second, with more champagne and hearty laughter. Things are really growing lively, while matter-of-fact flirtations and confidences enliven this hasty good cheer.

Hello! the lights in the jewel-box have suddenly grown dim. Scores of people have already risen to find their wraps. For a brief moment the foyer continues to be brilliant in light, and then one by one the lights go out. The flunkies are busy helping the men with their coats, the maids with the cloaks and frou-frou of the women. Then, for no evident reason, the main exit is closed, and a sign is hung up which reads:

"Guests are requested to leave by the Thames embankment exit.

"(Signed) THE LONDON COUNTY COUNCIL."

It is after midnight. The hand of the London County Council has fallen as mercilessly as the ax of the executioner.

Silently and without a word of protest they go, the millionaire, the adventuress, the diplomat, the noble lady and her lord, the money-lender, and the spendthrift, beauty, wit, and brains, all in one common band like a flock of sheep.

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"Why is the main entrance closed?" I ask an aged veteran in a powdered wig and knee-breeches.

"Well, sir, you see, sir, hit's an old law, sir, and the County Council, they won't 'ave it, sir, noways. Hit's on account of them wot lives on the Strand, shopkeepers and the like, sir. The noise of the 'ansoms, sir, is disturbin' to 'em."

I groped my way to the elevator leading to my numbered abode. The curtain had fallen, the play of the day was over, and the stage deserted. As I gained the floor supporting my numbered domicile a mighty chorus echoed up through an open window, and now wild cheering reverberated from the court below. "A banquet to some French gentleman, sir," explained the night watchman.

"Vive l'Angleterre! Vive la France!" rang out through the chill fog; then again and again the wild chorus singing the "Marseillaise."

The *entente cordiale* had broken loose, and I trembled for the slumber of those who lived along the Strand.

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CHAPTER V

The Devil's Highway

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CHAPTER V

The Devil's Highway



"HELL is a place much like London," Shelley once remarked. If this be true, the devil's favorite highway must be Piccadilly. Its character in daylight is as staidly respectable as that of Dr. Jekyll. At night it becomes like Hyde, pitiless and cruel, sordid and vicious. Its outcasts tramp along its length for prey and for prey only. It is not because of its charms, or allure, or the love of light and gaiety, that they seek its pavements nightly, but because of hunger and cold and of dire want that some of the

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thousands flock to it as a means to an end. Some of them have dragged themselves to it out of gloomy lodgings a long distance and, having reached it, have neither the health nor the heart to do much but save their strength for a smile and the trudge homeward. Others more fortunate, buoyed by good luck, flaunt their rouge tinsel and cheap splendor, with a heart of jade, hurrying on down muddy marble steps into sordid bars and out again, their shrewd eyes overlooking nothing, their instant perception having been trained to a seventh sense. Still others slouch on their vagabond way, keeping to the edge of Piccadilly's gutter. Many of these are outcasts whose every step leads them deeper into the mire of misery, hunger, and rags. They have long passed the stage of helping themselves, and the most they are able to do is to keep the body moving within the rags and out of the bobby's way, and, when luck favors, their stomachs warmed by a chance drink and a scrap to eat. Shuffling along among them may be seen a few grandmothers of those of the younger generation who flaunt their nocturnal finery.

The faces of these grandmothers are wrinkled like old apples. Their grimy, shrunken hands

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are horny like the claws of a turkey. The only spark of life in these aged wrecks seems still to smolder in the secret depths of their bleary, wicked eyes. The rest is but skin and bone and rags, always rags, the whole animated spasmodically by the sound of the bobby's voice.

They are creatures without hope, home, or destination. They reason one day as being different from another solely from the lack or the amount of food and drink it has brought, and, meager as is the amount, the drink forms the larger part of the equation until they stumble or reel and fall headlong in the gutter.

A very old woman stumbling and falling bruised and mumbling in the slime is a hideous sight, more so when the passing world tramps by without giving her a thought, much less a helping hand. Thus in her old age she must pay the penalty of her days, and at what price! With the rest I grew used to seeing this tottering grandmother just as I once grew used to seeing a bull-fight. She became a tradition; she became no longer a woman, but an object, and yet she was once young. It hardly seems possible, but it is quite true. The bleary eyes with their crafty glint were once the eyes of a child,

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PICCADILLY CIRCUS

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then of a sweetheart, then of a mother. Years and years slipped by, and with them grew the claws and the shrunken apple. The eyes have looked out upon, and askance at, the world so long that they have ceased to believe in it, protest, or criticize. To-morrow the bundle of rags may find itself before the bar in Bow Street, and the eyes and the grimy claws will try to explain. Or they may be engaged busily in a lucky chance to rob or even murder, and through it all the heart still retains its function, its dogged persistency to beat unto the end, and the end is not yet.

Piccadilly at night is a sordid tragedy. In its particular sordidness it stands unique among the "tenderloins" of the world.

All this is its night side. It is quite a different street in daylight. Its well-ordered shops are filled with well-made things, attractively presented in their windows—jewels, beautifully designed silver, splendid sticks and umbrellas, things in leather, excellent in quality and workmanship and that still rarer quality, good taste; Scotch homespuns for gentlemen, trinkets in gold, old lace and frills for fine ladies, gold-tipped and monogramed cigarettes for bachelors;

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smartly cut patent-leather slippers, some with racy scarlet heels; heavy shooting-boots for solid men, seals and note-paper for formal acceptances or regrets; salmon rods, gaily-tied flies and reels as carefully balanced as a watch; shops pungent in rare fruit, extravagant bunches of hot-house grapes, strawberries, asparagus, and pears reared out of season and sold at a fabulous price, shops for sleek top-hats and the latest things in comfortable ones; guns for the connoisseur, their gleaming barrels fresh from the skilled hand of an expert, the very smoothness of their action a joy to the man who knows; rare pictures, etchings, mellow mezzotints, and miniatures; Russian sables and French perfumes—all these things shine meritoriously in the windows of the celebrated street during the day.

In the morning Respectability is busy rambling or shopping. At one o'clock the popular and richly installed restaurants and grill-rooms are overcrowded with the conservative and a sprinkling of the fast set at luncheon. The polished grills flare with sizzling kidneys and honest chops.

From four until six the legion of tea-rooms are packed with families and the well-to-do mid-

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Arrangement with W. Thacker & Co., London. [Drawn by Frank Reynolds.]

THE TEA HOUR, PICCADILLY

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dle class. They swarm into the marbled entrances of these establishments and up the marbled stairs and into the gilded galleries for tea and cakes served with music. One might as well try to eliminate beer from Munich as tea from London. Collectively they remind one of a matinee audience from one of our best theaters—the mother, the young girl and her sweetheart; the actress and the youth; refined young women in town for a day's shopping; Mr. and Mrs. Haberdasher and their four healthy daughters; lean Aristocracy in mourning with his sister-in-law, she with her black purse studded with a sapphire, a thin wedding-ring shining upon her white hand as she removes her gloves; fat Autocracy squinting over his teacup at a memorandum-book and jotting down a decision for the morrow. Lavish as has been the expenditure in installing these tea-rooms with gilt and marble and liveried servants, their atmosphere is cheap, almost provincial.

Then night shuts down upon the city. The tea-trays are removed. Piccadilly flashes up ablaze with electricity. One by one the shops close and the great restaurants busy themselves with the more serious question of dinner.

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As the night darkens Piccadilly Circus, glitters in light. Leicester Square glows with halos from thousands of incandescents, illumining a sea of passing vehicles. Hansoms flash by dodging in and out of the vast traffic. A blinding light from an automobile slowly picking its way confronts you. In a second it is gone and you regain your vision. The busiest man in this labyrinth is the "bobby." He speaks to you, now giving you a polite and clear answer to your question without taking his eyes from the swarming traffic, the next instant he has sprung forward to avert a collision. The business of the night has begun. It is well that Respectability and his family have gone home, for the caste for the night's tragedy are already stepping where but an hour ago Respectability trod. Dr. Jekyl has drained his drug. Hyde and the Devil have assumed command. Until thirty minutes after midnight they take advantage of the opportunity to work hand in hand. "Permission" in this sense would be erroneous, since in London nothing criminal or vicious is allowed by law, but under present conditions the Devil has little cause to object. When the voice of the law cries "Halt" at 12:30 his work

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has been nicely accomplished, what more an the Devil ask? Why spoil a good thing, especially in conservative London, where nothing of his invention is legally licensed?

The result is a condition of hypocritical tolerance of dives open at fixed hours and closed majestically on the minute, whereupon the pavement and the circus of Piccadilly serve as standing room for thousands of unfortunates, a market-place such as does not exist in Paris and would not if it could. There is not much that is alluring or attractive about Piccadilly at night. This nocturnal center of sordid gaiety reeks with that which is purely bad, for it lacks that sole redeeming feature, *charm!* The types one meets are hardened in petty crime, and they are for the most part like the "artful dodger," skilled pickpockets. They are of all ages and all nationalities, the outcasts and the dregs of foreign countries. These latter fare badly under the majesty of the law. Yet many of them are more honest than a like product from Whitechapel.

Bad change only too often accompanies bad drinks, especially when served to a foreigner, even in the foreign quarters, for along the route

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of the Devil's highway there are, you must know, byways leading to the French quarter, a settlement of no mean proportion with night cafés and restaurants imported from Paris, just as there are German beer halls beneath restaurants of the same extraction and thronged nightly with the more fortunate riffraff of the pavement, while the cheaper dens flourish beneath important looking bars. In these the plumed lady with the rat-like eyes, their brilliancy enhanced by rouge and belladonna, engages you in conversation amid the reek of cigarette smoke and the tinkle of an orchestra composed of three lean-jawed, ex-low comedians provided with two mandolins and a banjo.

Here the waiters are in a hurry to supply as many drinks as possible in a given space of time.

One of the low comedians, to all appearances the lowest, lays aside his banjo and rises to sing, an event among the ladies of the plumes, for he is evidently a favorite.

"'E's clever, 'e is!" confides a fat girl whose grubby hand is planted on the top of a broken umbrella handle of imitation pearl.

In a high-keyed, strident tenor the singer

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launches forth, "Give my Regards to Leicester Square."

Four Italian fruit merchants enter, the collars of their woolly overcoats turned up.

They slouch over to a center table and make the acquaintance of three hawk-eyed young women eager to converse. A sailor on leave from a man-of-war has fallen in with a girl at my elbow, whose sad gray eyes burn with a brave light in them above her hectic cheeks. The sailor is kind and sentimental. He places his great paw of a hand over her own, the finger-tips of which she has a habit of concealing in their palms, for her cheap gloves are sadly out at the fingers. He tells her about his ship, and much about his daily life, about the breech action of their best thirteen-inch gun. The girl can not understand all he tries to explain, but she seems to grow a little happier as he talks. There is something respectful in his unsteady conversation which pleases her, and she tells him in return of a week she once spent in the country as slavey to "a master-weaver's folks near Manchester."

Again the refrain "Give my Regards to the Square"; the roomful join in the chorus; a floating veil of tobacco smoke hangs over the

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squalid groups at the little tables, and the plumed ladies continue to descend the steps to glance about and exit by another marble flight leading to the street. A minstrel enters, one who has seen better days on the sands of Brighton. The burnt cork smeared upon his face is in odd contrast to his tawny hair streaked with gray; a hat that would have fitted a doll is secured by an elastic and cocked over one ear. He comes in from the chill street, smiling and bowing "Sorry to intrude," and receives a nodded, sullen greeting from the orchestra. The girl, from the spare change the sailor has given her, slips "tuppence" into the old minstrel's hand as he edges apologetically past her chair, and the banana merchants buy him a drink at the end of his song. Somehow you feel like giving all the spare change you ever possessed to the wretched and unfortunate ones about you. The lime of the street has chilled you, and the things you have seen have set you thinking, you with your cozy salon, your mosaicked bathroom, clean things, a cheery fire, friends, and a favorite book and pipe awaiting you.

And they? These nocturnal outcasts, what is their lot and destination when the night is

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done? Debts and the friendless, fireless room they call "'ome," a room that knows not love or honesty, behind whose silent door no voice of mate, of child, or mother ever calls a cheery welcome, and whose occupant, be she ill or desperate or hungry, must look sharp to keep out of the hands of the sheriff or the jail. Few deserve either if the whole truth were known. The bobby in his honest heart knows this and is many a time their best friend. It is London law which is responsible for most of its unlicensed horrors. To-morrow it may occur to some opulent lord to propose a bill that may in the course of time help the existing conditions. But in London reforms of this tendency take root slowly, and old laws remain unchanged for generations.

Unlike our New York dives, built and furnished hastily to survive through the harvest-time of a wide-open town, London's marbled and gilded resorts have been built to last. Even the leather chairs in the various night lounges preserve a worn polish like the bindings of unexpurgated editions.

An undisputed authority says, speaking of the present state of affairs, that "in London there

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are one hundred and twenty-nine thousand registered paupers and one million five hundred thousand persons that are practically starving. There is also a vast population that crawls about in subcellars and filth and misery unutterable. In every English city one-fifth of the inhabitants never know what it is to have enough to eat, never sleep in a decent bed, never know wealth nor decency nor comfort"; furthermore, that "there is a steady increase in the ranks of paupers, the starving, the degenerate, the brutish, and the prowling and slinking creatures of the East End," and he further adds that "these are the awful menaces and retribution of a system of civilization that must have in it something radically wrong."

What London needs is work for its army of unemployed. Charitable donations and the generosity of the individual do but little momentary good, and effect nothing toward a radical betterment of the situation. Were it not for the good work done by the Salvation Army shelters and soup stations, thousands of outcasts would die of exposure and starvation.

There are few men who have made a more exhaustive study of London's outcasts than Mr.

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George R. Sims; his philanthropic enterprise in giving these unemployed work has the advantage of being a practical scheme developed by a man who has been personally indefatigable in knowing the poor and their needs.

The night is still young when I leave and gain the street by way of the muddy marble steps. There are dozens of dens along Piccadilly's highway and its byways of the same class, and there are those which are more palatial, less smoky, but quite as crowded with the flotsam of the town. The Café Europe, flaunting its brazen front upon a conspicuous corner, is a dingy caravansary with marble-topped tables, supplied with an assortment of rouged women of every Continental nationality. It is quite an important place, this Café Europe, the most important rendezvous of the jetsam of Leicester Square and "the Halls"; and its big room below stairs is not large enough to cope with its *clientèle.* It was here that I found a vacant seat in a drafty corner and refilled my pipe. Suddenly a woman in a seat behind me addressed me in French. Getting no response, she essayed English, then Italian, then German, then Hungarian.

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"English will do," I replied as I turned and found myself in the presence of a thick-set ogress in a vermilion hat. She smiled, that is, her mouth widened maliciously beneath her hooked nose, and she lifted the lids of two steel-gray eyes. She knew precisely the type she was addressing. Her fifty years had provided her with a knowledge of human nature that a chief of a detective bureau would have envied. This ogress grew interesting. She could have adapted her conversation, I believe, as easily to a cannibal, a Chinaman, a vicar, or a murderer. She knew the world at large. There was hardly a city of any importance that she did not know as well as the interior of her gaudy pocket-book. Singapore, New York, Tokyo, Paris, Budapest, and Dawson City were as familiar to the ogress as Main Street to a village mayor. Behind that mask of smile was a heart as criminal as Fagin's, and beneath the vermilion hat lay a brain, which but for its cool and clever reasoning and its ability



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to deceive, would long since have gone with the rest of the ogress to the gallows.

To-night, like to-morrow night and the night after, she sits amid the reek of smoke and the din of the town, watching as patiently as a leopard for her prey, careful neither to repulse nor frighten her quarry, alert to catch instantly the mood of the stranger, and here they are all strangers to the ogress. The short, silent man with the stubby black mustache who is sitting alone over a beer she eliminates from her gaze. She has too clear a recollection of him once in Brussels, whither his chief at Scotland Yard had despatched him in the spring of '81. She recalls too his breaking in a door, *her* door, behind which were four carefully chosen acquaintances busily molding bright English coinage. That was years ago and the affair is over. It was that quick brain of hers which saved her at the time. Again in a hotel robbery in Nice in which the ogress was largely interested, the man with the stubby black mustache followed her so closely that she was unfortunately obliged to leave the Riviera during the height of the season and open an absinthe "buvette" for "camelots," venders of cheap novelties who hawk their wares in

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front of the Parisian cafés. Here, in her own buvette, they would have murdered her one night for the contents of her till, had she not foreseen it in time and slipped out into the cool night air.

Now she is in London, her identity forgotten among so many others of her kind.

A man at the farther end of the room has paid for his drink and risen to go. As he trips up the steps, the one with the stubby black mustache follows him slowly, relighting the stump of his cigar.

And in the eyes of the ogress there flashes a glint of satisfaction.

The waiter is at my elbow. I deposit in his fat palm a sovereign in payment for the ogress's hot glass of milk and my own refreshment. He spreads my change on the table as I bid the ogress good night.

"A shilling would help me with my cab fare," she ventures coolly. I nod my assent, and she picks one out of the change. She asks for no more, no less. It seems strange, but as I have inferred, the ogress is tactful, even discreet. The remainder of my change, I discover later, has lost its accustomed ring, the only silver shilling

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in the amount being now in the lizard-skin portemonnaie of the one in the vermilion hat.

As I pass out I see the waiter is taking an order from a tall miner from the Transvaal with whom the ogress is laughing boisterously. Later, he may be advertising for his diamond-studded watch and trying to remember what he spent.

And now the crowd pours forth from the music-halls, the Alhambra, the Pavilion, and that most brilliant of all, the Empire. The street echoes with the hoarse cries of uniformed officials calling up the waiting vehicles, their whistles sounding in the fog like the weird answering notes of tree-toads.

Thousands are pouring from the theaters out upon the already crowded pavement with its nightly procession of painted women and slouching outcasts. The numerous supper-rooms are being quickly filled. There is still time before 12:30 to rush through something to eat.

These supper-rooms are of every variety, from the most fashionable ones like the "Criterion," "Princess," and the "Trocadero" to the coarser kind, "Monaco's," or well-fitted mundane resorts like "Scott's."

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Unfortunately some difficulty with the authorities has closed for the moment that gilded resort frequented by the younger blood and the smartest of the demi-monde, and known under the title of "Jimmy's"; were it not for this unfortunate raid one might sup there.

But the street is infinitely more full of human interests than any of its adjacent interiors. If the night be clear, there is a certain veneer of light and gaiety even in the sordid procession, but when it storms there is a certain grim horror about this Devil's highway; nights when the unfortunate seeks gladly the shelter of a friendly doorway or the hooded entrance of the now darkened theaters; nights when the tottering grandmothers stumble on down Piccadilly in the drip; nights when those whose heart has long ago been broken give up hope and suffer mutely. Hundreds of them stand thus at this hour in the rain, thousands if it be clear and in early spring or summer, when the area of Piccadilly Circus becomes a market, a pen of humanity which does not disperse until the last moment prescribed by the law, a sight that happily does not exist anywhere else in the world, except in conservative London. To it the Parisian boulevards at night,

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thronged with every class of stranger and Parisian, gay with the crowded café terraces past which file the world and his wife, appear in contrast like a fairyland.

Piccadilly knows neither gaiety nor charm. It was during this late last hour that my hansom clattered up into Piccadilly Circus packed with its sea of wretched humanity.

Suddenly the wheel from a passing growler became tangled with that of my hansom. A sound of cracking wood and a rush from all sides to see the collision followed, and while my driver busied himself with his opinion of the director of the offending growler, two coster girls beside the broken wheel flew at each other like game chickens. There is no use trying to print what they said. Suffice it to say that their opinion of each other was chosen and convincing, and was rich in the patois of Billingsgate. In a second their respective husbands appeared upon the scene of battle and expressed their own views as to who was in the wrong. The very stones rocked with language.

The next instant the bobbies were breaking their way through the crowd. They settled the costers and their better halves, and turned to

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[Drawn by Frank Reynolds.]

THE EAST END OR MAULEY KISS.

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the subject of the collision. They wanted to know the facts and pulled forth their note-books, begging my pardon for disturbing me, "but we'd like to know, sir, the facts; name, sir, and address."

The crowd surged, the drivers swore, and amid the bedlam of "Ould yer row!" "Blimy if the bloke isn't goin' to stop 'ere all night," I sat in my no doubt offending hansom in silence. I was not eager to appear as a witness. I know of better places than a London police court in the early morning, so I assumed the rôle of a sphinx and sat staring over the sea of humanity jeering at my red-faced cabby, whose flow of explanation would have convinced anything but a London bobby of his innocence.

Again the two stalwart policemen questioned me for the truth. This time they sharply demanded it. There was no alternative; my view as an eye-witness to the accident was required, and without further delay. To block Piccadilly Circus at that hour in the morning is a serious affair, and blocked it was, and every one seemed to be talking at once.

Then, remembering the *entente cordiale,* I shrugged my shoulders and with an extravagant

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gesture and some hesitancy saluted the two giants in blue.

"Messieurs," I began, "je regrette infiniment, mais je ne parle pas Anglais."

"Pass on!" thundered the majesty of the law, and the crowd fell back, my red-faced cabby chuckling to himself as we moved out of that sea of misery and struck off at a sharp pace toward Leicester Square. Not a light now gleamed forth along the Devil's highway, not a spark from restaurant or bar.

The darkened buildings loomed up as if from a deserted marsh. A church bell sounded the half-hour. The night's work was done. Even the Devil has gone to bed. As we turned a corner the light from my cabby's lanterns glowed in passing upon a bundle of shuffling rags, shaken with a cough—a grandmother waiting for dawn.

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CHAPTER VI

In Which I Escape and am Captured

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CHAPTER VI

In Which I Escape and am Captured



TO-MORROW London will be under the pall of another Sunday. Two concerts will be given, one at Queen's, the other at Albert Hall. People will be heard with squeaky shoes upon the silent pavements. No theater will be open. A Parisian Sunday is the fête day of the week, a day when you dine "au restaurant" and go in a friendly mood to the play, a night when the audience is made up of *chic* Parisiennes mixed with the plain bourgeois to whom the day is a restful holiday. The foyers then between the acts are filled with these comfortable families. The fat mama is in her best black silk, and her daughters more attractive in their Sunday best; the young soldier

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son is on leave from the caserne, and the jolly papa worries about nothing. All these are mingled in the throng with pretty women whose charm and grace are due to their view of life and their Latin blood. The Parisian Sunday sends us home to begin another week after some subtle and witty play, congratulating ourselves that we live where we do. It is your charm, Paris, which has lured the world within your gates, and many of us never regret having entered them.

But I am getting homesick and I diverge.

How and where to make one's escape on the morrow? that is the question. Why not to Brighton? "It is *the* place to run down to on Sunday." They are apt to confide this to you *sotto voce* and wink in further explanation. It is a gay crowd who run down to this seaside Mecca Sundays. The train, I am told, will be full of gaiety girls and people of leisure in smart togs. "Of course if you go, old chap," imparts to me another, "you'll lunch at the Metropole. It will be packed, and you'd better book your seat in the train and your table for luncheon in advance. You'll see everybody there Sundays. They run down in automobiles too. If they're

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not all engaged for the morning, you'd better see about yours at once. They're apt to give you some wretched old thing that crawls if you come late and find all the good ones gone. But there'll be a jolly enough crowd on the train if you wish to take that. It leaves at a comfortable hour and rushes you down there with no stops and in time for luncheon."

Mademoiselle has donned a *chic* red hat and a confection of a traveling-gown, having accepted in a carefully written little note with "tout mon cœur." It has been a dreadful week in this solid, grim, and foggy city. It was an excellent idea, this running down to Brighton. We shall be clear of the fog and the two Sunday concerts at any rate. Mademoiselle is radiant.

"Ecoutez, quelle ville!" she confides to you dramatically. "Quelle ville! Mon Dieu! mais c'est triste, vous savez. Si je reste à ce Londres je vais mourir. Surement!"

We decide to take the express; it is cheaper than the gasolene habit. What a morning! The fog has lifted and the sun at last is pouring over the town. The yellow Thames has become opalescent, gleaming in dancing facets of light. A faint haze softens the massive buildings.

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With the advent of the sun London assumes a silent holiday air. The people along the street at least look happier, but the streets themselves with their absent traffic are as silent as the great river. The smoke-begrimed buildings, now that they no longer stand grimly up under the drenching blanket of fog, have regained a better mien. As we rumble on to the station in the sunshine of this silent Sunday morning, a sudden burst of music strikes the ear, and a company of scarlet-coated soldiers swings into view as we pass Buckingham Palace. On they march, past our hansom—bare-legged Highlanders and giants in enormous beavers. They are a thrilling lot of real soldiers. Many of these red-coats are healthy-looking young chaps, slim, tall, with fresh complexions, passing with a swinging stride, wearing their pill-box caps cocked over one ear and carrying their light riding-whips, an absurd



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little affair which, I assume, is more for looks than for use.

One is struck with the trim, healthy cleanliness of these soldiers. They march with a virile active step. They look like men trained and bred to fight, and as they file past in the sun they appear in the pink of condition. They stand out in odd contrast to the French. The slovenly little piou-piou, with his dusty red trousers and gaiters, serving his time, is generally undersized. He seems to be playing at soldier against his will. It is not a pleasant business to him. He looks forward to earning his freedom from his military service, when he will be enabled to marry for a *dot* and become the genial proprietor of a café and have his vine and fig-tree in the country, beneath which he can spend his old age with his good Annette.

On marches the brilliant little procession of red-coats. In the mean time we watch them from the front row of our hansom, for the bobby has called a serious halt to our journey. What if we missed the train! It is getting dangerously near the time of its departure for Brighton. But the bobby is adamant. The British soldier has the right of way.

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"Quelle heure est il?" gasps Mademoiselle.

"We have eleven minutes left," I am obliged to confess.

On file the red-coats. What if we arrive to find the gates leading to the seaside paradise closed! Mademoiselle is getting nervous. Ah! "C'est embêtant!" she cries, with an impatient little quaver in her voice. Three minutes gone, and still the red-coats in view.

Ah, at last! the end. We are free and the good sound horse is doing his best. Seven minutes later we are aboard the crowded express, and again Mademoiselle becomes happy. Here, too, were the gaiety girls and many people of leisure. We were lucky to get seats, two at one of the little green smoking-tables in the rear car. Of course, it was evidently the thing to do to run to Brighton.

"Ah, c'est chic!" cried Mademoiselle, as her quick eye caught sight of the world and his wife about us.

Here is a famous *danseuse* from the Alhambra with two young bloods in immaculate clothes; there a ruddy old *bon vivant* in spats with two English beauties; the rest were club men and idle youths, jolly, healthy-looking fellows.

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A LONDON RAILWAY STATION

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Matches were struck, cigarettes and cigars lighted, whiskies and sodas sparkled on the little green tables. Then suddenly the hum of general conversation subsided. We were off to the sea. The men read the morning papers and puffed in silence, speaking in monosyllables now and then to their fair companions, who seemed quite used to passing the journey thus in silence.

In France such a trainful would have remained gay from the beginning of the journey to the end. Laughter and gaiety and badinage would have enlivened every mile. All would have enjoyed themselves to the full, for to the French such a jolly little voyage would have been taken *en fête*. But here was a different state of affairs. Most of the *voyageurs* looked bored. They were content to smoke and read the morning's news, breaking the monotony now and then by a fresh cigarette. Even the children with their *blasé* mamas and papas were silent. Here and there along the sunny roads we catch a glimpse of an auto *en route* to Brighton filled with some jolly party who have been wise enough to escape from the silent city. These automobiles run at a sensible speed. In France the automobile has become a pest.

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Tearing, ripping juggernauts that endanger life along the highroads, kill people even in the village streets, cover the hedges with dust, and making riding and driving impossible. Heedless of warning signs they rush through little villages such as Dives, on the way to Trouville, at top speed night or day. They have practically ruined many a charming French country place. The Frenchman is somewhat of a maniac in sport. He goes in it for sensation.

It was gratifying to see these English machines running along merrily and at so sane a speed. The dare-devil pace which one sees in France does not seem to exist here. That speed at which the occupants of a big tonneau must disguise themselves as arctic explorers and to whom trees, country, sky, river, and field appear as a blur, has no attraction for this solid race, a race which produces more keen sportsmen, better riders, and surer field shots than perhaps any other nation in the world.

The Frenchman mingles too much romance with his sport to be on the average a safe shooting companion. During his frequent day dreams he may as likely as not blow off the top of your head while dreaming of Ninette.

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"Les chasseurs en France sont des poseurs," agrees Mademoiselle.

There are strict laws as regards the speed of automobiles in England. "There's been an awful outraw about 'em!" declared the little spinster barmaid to me.

And now the contents of the smoking-car has risen to its feet, for we are rolling into Brighton. Under the shed of the big station scores of carriages are waiting to receive the chappies, the gaiety girls, and the seasoned idlers.

Brighton is a hilly town of considerable area. Its main street runs down-hill from the station to the sea, and there are narrow steep little streets branching from it. Along the main hill leading to the sea-front and the big hotels and apartments are little shops choked with every conceivable kind of trash—sea-shell mirrors and souvenirs in mother-of-pearl, molasses candy of great age, and cheap postal cards. There is no getting away from the fact that it is still Sunday, for the main street, now that the contents of the train has passed, is as dead as a suburb of Philadelphia. Every public saloon has its doors locked, some to reopen only at stated hours when they will endeavor to make up for the loss

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THE SEA-FRONT — BRIGHTON.

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of trade during church time. Only the sea-front with its broad promenade and its big hotels is alive, and this animation is mild, I can assure you. Nurse-maids and children, holiday trippers, old and young ladies taking the air in wheeled carriages, a cross between a baby's perambulator and Mother Goose's shoe on wheels, dandies and fussy old gentlemen, flirting misses discreetly followed by gawky youths, all these go to make up the thousands who promenade in comparative silence. Verily the English take their pleasures grimly.

Against the masonry skirting this promenade the yellow sea swashes, combing under the long iron pier with a concert-hall at its extreme end. A few slot machines enliven this pier, and there are convenient benches running along its spine, with here and there a pair of giggling lovers sitting as far away from the other couple as possible and in the most obscure and least windy corners of this generous settee.

Completing the list of attractions along the pier is a camera-obscura. This is a darkened box of an affair presided over by a wheezy old man, who lectures feebly upon the canvas disk reflecting the sea, sky, and the prome-

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naders, "hall, sir, in their natural colors, as you hobserve." Occasionally one is forced to observe upon its magic surface the gestures of the whispered and tender endearments of the lovers hidden in their windy bower of bliss. They are much like the silly ostrich who buried its head in the sand to escape from the public gaze.

The steps of the Metropole are crowded with the people who have come in auto or by train. The air is of a peculiar softness, blowing, as it does, straight off the sea. Those who have found arm-chairs on the steps are chatting and watching the arrivals. The corridors within are also crowded. Here the air is heavy with perfume, and the women seem much overdressed. It is an hour in which to be seen and to gaze one's fill at one's neighbor. It is fortunate that we have ordered a table. Three large dining-rooms, solemn and ornate, are not enough to accommodate those who have been lured upon this fascinating excursion. Within these spacious *salles à manger* a sea of people are at luncheon. It is a strange throng, composed of large conservative families occupying the big tables, and the demi-monde the little ones. Nowhere

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have I seen more children lunching with their elders, and they are pretty children too, quiet and well-bred, with complexions like roses. At three separate tables are families counting six and even seven fair-haired young daughters, very tall for their age, slim and straight as young willows, and each possessing a neat sailor hat; a little beyond is a gracious-looking mother, a white-haired father, and five little girls so much alike in their sailor hats and sailor suits that, were it not for their slightly varying heights, one could not tell them apart.

It is a delight to see these fresh English children. There is a certain healthy dignity about them and an absence of artificiality which is charming. I know some American babies who cultivate the airs of duchesses. It is a question whether a child whose earthly possessions mount up into the millions has not the right to cultivate any air it likes. Dry goods and pork can produce some wonderful creations and a dominating independence which is amazing. I have known personally despotic tots of five who refuse to drive in anything less than the family brougham. It was restful to watch these English children. They seemed to spring up like

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Arrangement with W. Thacker & Co., London.

[Drawn by Frank Reynolds.]

AT BRIGHTON

The "Lady-Killer"

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roses in this hot-bed of hardened humanity at luncheon. They lent innocence and purity to a scene where so many thorny old trees had grown crooked and gnarled in life, seasoned, seamed, and smoked in the ways of the world, and among whom was a more than goodly majority of Saturday worshipers with Rhine-wine names. Even their English accent does not disguise their ancient blood. It is they who are so ever-ready to lend. Their power is indisputable. In London they have become a necessity, silent partners of great enterprises, builders of giant structures, the patchers-up of family leaks. They are past masters in the profitable industry of lending gold. They hold within the hollow of their cold palms the life-blood of generations of those who live not wisely but too well. Their obsequious benefaction has risen to such power that it has enslaved a vast portion of the richest city in the world and brought to their doors much of its aristocracy, hat in hand, to ask a favor.

The palm-room after luncheon becomes animated, for it is the custom to smoke here and have one's coffee.

Little parties are already chatting in the

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wicker chairs. Among the cool, green palms are cages of singing birds, and the long room looks out upon a solid vine-covered and terraced court.

The crowded conservatory becomes smoky,



ALONG THE PROMENADE.

the birds twitter above the bubble of conversation. Mademoiselle, being a Parisienne, becomes an object of interest. Her *chic* red hat and her trim costume are regarded in detail by the

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women, and the men, in passing, absently focus their monocles upon her merry eyes.

"Bah! they are stupid, these messieurs," she remarks. "They are so unemotional, so solemn, so unromantic! Come," she adds, "it is so smoky here, let us take the air."

Again to the sea-front, but it has blown up colder, and the streaming black crowd promenading along the quay has thinned considerably. In the throng are two *blasé* youths walking and chatting by the side of one of the perambulators wherein they have just tucked a pretty young woman very smart in her jewels and sables, and almost doll-like in her wheeled carriage.

Farther on a crowd has gathered against the iron rail. Below them on the sand Brother Brown is about to preach. Brother Brown is an earnest-looking negro in a top hat and funereal gloves. His lieutenant, Brother Jones, a tall, solemn-looking negro, is standing respectfully back of Brother Brown, and leaning upon his umbrella while he listens intently with head on side. Both have been singing a hymn, Brother Jones's bass voice bellowing ably. And now Brother Brown lays his umbrella at his feet, removes one cotton glove, and, producing the

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good Book, launches forth upon his text. It is a short text, but Brother Brown dwells at length upon the true meaning of the minutest word contained therein, while Brother Jones gazes at the now darkening sky and shifts to the other leg during pauses. The assembled multitude listens in silence. Some persons have stopped out of curiosity. The uninterested keep on moving, but no one disturbs the speaker.

Farther on a voice has broken out on the salt air, the voice of a hatless, black-eyed young man. He is expounding in his own fashion the labor question. At times he is not very clear, but he is always vociferous. Most of his statements he retracts, apologizing for his lack of the precise statistics. "However," he cries, "you may judge for yourselves," and rushes again into a tirade against capital. If you are a judge of criminology, you may observe that one-half of the speaker's face is abnormal, a drooping, shifty eye and a cruel jaw. The other half is that of a youthful fanatic.

It is not gay, this beach of Brighton. Gloomy-looking quadrangles flanked by expensive apartments look out to sea. Refined people spend

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weeks at Brighton, but in quiet, gray streets away from the throng.

The air has grown chilly, and the dreary yellow sea seethes beneath the pier swashing against the masonry protecting the town. Again we seek the shop windows as a distraction before the express shall take us back to London. The well-seasoned molasses candy and the sea-shell and mother-of-pearl souvenirs all are there and in their accustomed places.

Ah! here is one we have not seen. A little terra-cotta sailor smoking a pipe.

"C'est joli, ce petit bonhomme là!" cries Mademoiselle with an effort. Poor little Parisienne, have you ever had a worse fête day in your life? You are chilled and homesick. You do not understand this Brighton Sabbath. It is better that we take the train back to London. Come, we shall have a chat alone in your favorite seat before it becomes crowded, and we will play we are a jolly party going to Saint-Germain, and that Mimi and Santelle are with us, and François, and that good-for-nothing Gaston who brings for a picnic the bad wine of Madame Gouven and nothing else except his worthless jolly self. That good-for-nothing fellow who

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will tell you that no one since Botticelli has known how to paint, and expects you to believe it.

The train roared on—she was tired, and presently, with a little sigh, she fell asleep. The car itself was silent save for the snap of playing-cards and the occasional pop of a fresh soda.



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CHAPTER VII

Here and There

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CHAPTER VII

Here and There



THE yellow 'bus stopped to take on a passenger. He was a fat, choleric old gentleman who had hailed it from afar and was now waving his umbrella wildly at the driver next to whom I was seated, and spattering his gaiters in the mud as he ran. The genial old driver waited for him; he had seen old gentlemen run before. So did the little cockney conductor at the bottom of the narrow stairs, hand on bell and now ushering in the winded old gentleman to a seat inside. The horses tightened their traces, and we went swinging on in the tide of London. And I recalled

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that inimitable drawing of Charles Keane's, of just such an excited and testy old gentleman who, seated reading upon a bench in St. James's Park, sees his approaching 'bus on the other side of the high iron railing and the only exit yards away. "Hi, there!" he shouts, frantically waving his umbrella. "Hi, there!" he bellows. "Don't worry, guv'ner," calls the driver, "we see yer, we see yer with the naked eye."

It was this kind of a 'bus driver I was sitting next to this morning as we rumbled along the bottom of that granite cañon, Fleet Street. Up on its dripping sides I catch a glimpse of some lighted office window, and the clock far up on the Law Courts appeared like a yellow moon. All around me, hurrying through the fog-swept cañon, swarms a never-ending stream of humanity, dodging each other like ants, some leaving the main stream to run into gloomy alleys. One rushing ant, having patiently dodged his way up to the corner of a transverse slit in the cañon, penetrates a blind alley, realizes his mistake, dodges back to the main stream and keeps doggedly on his way. These ants are of every class and condition. Hundreds of them find their way up rickety dark stairs into

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gloomy low-ceiled offices and out again. Their movement is silent and incessant, impressive in its compact magnitude. In many of the cañon's crevasses are decrepit old courts, blackened doorways, cat walks, dreary houses leaning in mutual support, with smoking chimney-pots and dust-grimed windows back of which slaves more ant-like activity. Out of these wretched offices and lofts pours the product of literature, art, and science, rare books, all-powerful newspapers, conceived and printed in the innermost regions of these rat-holes, the composite parts of herculean machinery, the output of great enterprises.

Fleet Street is essentially the home of the publishing world. Many of these publishers, and famous ones at that, are still plying their trade in humble offices, tucked away in grimy courts and darkened alleys, interiors which have not changed a whit since Dickens described them.

A soggy flight of worn stairs, a creaking entrance door, a box behind choked with printed matter, a drafty window of inquiry, a loft somewhere to store the remainder of the débris, and the publisher's private office, ill-lit by little

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sunken windows and warmed by an old-fashioned hob-grate fire, sending its desultory light wandering over the low ceiling and upon shelves and into corners which the artful spider has long since covered with her veil. Such is the interior.

And yet the Londoner is shrewder at business than we are, I am told. His pace is slower, more methodical and conservative. He takes longer to give a decision than we do, but when it is given it has been solidly and shrewdly thought out. In one case in the publishing world five successive able American managers failed to give satisfaction. They are clever business men, these solid Londoners, and competition here is of the keenest. Even my jolly old driver has felt it, for his skilful and responsible position was not easily attained. He was selected, he tells me, after a rigorous examination as to character and his knowledge of driving and horses.

For this examination an inspector takes out on a trial 'bus some twenty applicants at a time, when each is given a distance in the crowded traffic to prove his presence of mind, his fitness, and his skill. "You've got to 'ave nerve and think quick," declares my driver.

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Time after time as we rumbled and swayed easily along in the sea of traffic only his quick decision and his trained knowledge of the different types of vehicles and their drivers about us avoided a smash-up. The ease with which he handled the reins was amazing, and all the time he kept up his good-humored talk.

"Newgate, sir!" he remarked, nodding to a gloomy street to the right. "They used to 'ang 'em in that street," and he chirped to his horses.

"Ye see, sir," speaking of Holborn, "only a little while ago it was a deep dip of a hill. They leveled it lately, about thirty-five year ago."

"Excuse me, sir," he said, as he finished a short chat with the lady on his left and explained to me the fact that the little woman who had been chatting with him was a "lydy of quality."

"Why, she's rich, she is, an' drives 'er own 'osses. Think of a lydy beneathin' herself by speakin' to a 'bus driver! Why there's some that wouldn't open their 'ed, them wot's livin' in the West Hend."

By this time we had reached the Bank of England. Nothing can be more suggestive of solidity than this low, gray mass of stone. It

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stands there in its massive simplicity, the richest safe in the world.

It was noon and Broad Street was alive with hatless clerks strolling over to favorite and reasonable snuggeries for luncheon. Hundreds of well-groomed young men filled this London Wall Street. Fat bondholders and financiers were getting into their coupés or automobiles, and, mingled in the throng, were hurrying trusted servants in plum-colored liveries and top hats. The fog had lifted and the warm sun glistened against the drenched buildings. London is a city of light and shade, mostly shade.

I climbed down from the yellow 'bus and went in search of luncheon, rambling back until I chanced upon the name my genial driver had given me. It had been designated as a restaurant, back of St. Paul's. This I discovered to be a busy fish-market one hundred years old, with its open windows glistening with evil-eyed lobsters, giant crabs, green turtles, salmon, turbot, and sole. Over its sanded floor worked a staff of white-aproned clerks busy with the orders of waiting patrons. Up a worn, steep flight of stairs leading from the sanded floor the rest of

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THE RICHEST SAFE IN THE WORLD

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the *clientèle* were ascending to the restaurant occupying the two floors above.

Memorable fish-cakes, were your like ever enjoyed! Fish-cakes made of fish, not codfish, as I was an hour later informed by an important-looking gentleman below stairs in a shining silk tile standing in front of his collection of deep-sea delicacies. I asked him about his fish, for many were of species new to me.

This individual had an aggressive politeness about him and an eye as cruel as a shark's. Besides, as I say, he wore (for the hour) a shining silk tile and a frock coat, two details which he evidently wished me to observe. Having addressed him with that politeness one is used to in France (one raises one's hat in Paris, be it to fishmonger or *député*), he regarded me out of his savage eyes for a moment and asserted his rank by a snarl of explanation; my manner had puzzled him. No gentleman had ever raised his hat to him. Was I of his class? or below it? or above it? He became aggressive to be on the safe side.

"And are these all English fish?" I asked.

"Yes, sir," he snapped—the "sir" evidently being from force of habit,—eyeing me coolly.

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"That's wot we call fish. They're the best that can be had in all England. They're none of your codfish that you call fish in America. We only cater to 'igh-class customers, *we* do; them wot has their mansions. All kinds of codfish, what we call codfish, is sold here to Jews. They wouldn't do for the best market in the biggest city in the world."

"Thank you," said I. "It is extraordinary how much you know about America. I am indebted to you."

"Good morning," he snarled. He entered his domain and, donning a white apron, berated a hireling opening oysters, to further convince me of his prosperity.

"Tell me, what is a 'bob'?" I had asked one of the waiters in a smart restaurant.

"Well, in *your* language, sir, you calls it a shillin', sir, but in *hour* language, sir, we calls it a 'bob,'" said he.

France is a country of universal politeness among its class who serve, yet it is the most democratic of nations. In England there is no democracy of this kind evident. The aristocratic scion of a family generations old gives all to his eldest son and sends his youngest out to

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shift for himself. The private solicitor dances in attendance upon the secretary of the lord. The second man cringes before the butler; the housemaid before the housekeeper; the kitchen-maid before the cook; the second scullery-maid stands awestruck before the first; the slavey accepts the daily insult of the second kitchen-maid. The head coachman, fattened upon his lord's estate, runs his stable like a despot and only deigns to take orders from his superiors when he sits smilingly upon the family coach. The groom becomes a tyrant to the stable boy. English egotism will not have it otherwise.

It was in the tailor shop of a pleasant old Scotchman that I witnessed an elder son, a man of high title and great wealth, lay bare his character. The genial old Scotchman and I were talking when the door opened with a wrench and a tall man, immaculately dressed, strode in and began a tirade against the kindly old tailor.

"I tell you," he roared, "I'll not have you bothering me with my brother's debts, do you hear?"

The old Scotchman tried quietly to explain.

"I don't want your explanation, I'm damned if ——"

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"But, my lord!" ventured MacDonald timidly.

"Do you understand?" bellowed the irate nobleman. "I'll have none of your explanation. This is the second time I've been bothered with your miserable account among my papers on my desk. If my brother is a thief it's none of my affair, do you hear? If he's a thief," he cried savagely, "let him settle his own affairs, but mind you, you'll not bother me again about it."

"Very good, my lord," and MacDonald bowed and held his peace as the immaculate giant in the faultless clothes slammed the door behind him and jumped into his private hansom.

When he had gone I asked this kindly old tailor what had happened. He paused for a moment, the better to control his voice and his hands, both of which were in a tremble.

"Well, you see, sir," he began, "nearly two years ago his brother came to me one bitter cold night, as bad a night as we ever had in London, sir, and asked me for an overcoat. He was obliged to run down to Essex, he said, and it was a long drive from the station to the country-seat he was going to. He had been an old

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customer of mine, Mr. Edric had, and I had made his clothes for him since he was a lad at school. I gave him the warmest coat I had, for I was lucky enough to have one that another gentleman had ordered and never called for, and sir," he said sadly, "I never saw the coat or heard from the brother again. At the end of the year I sent my bill to his lordship, asking his lordship's pardon, but would he be so kind as to forward it to his brother. No answer came, and a day or so ago I sent another statement to him. Mr. Edric, I have heard, is in Australia. He was a fine young man, and I dare say has been in bad straits." The old man paused and half turned away. Then he said, his voice steadier:

"Let's see, sir; was it the gray you liked, or was it a bit heavy? Quite right, sir. Of course, I'm not suggesting, sir, but here is something, sir, a *grand* cloth, I'll guarantee it for wear," and he opened a roll of homespun.

I chose it absently, for my mind was upon the lord who had refused to pay a brother's debt and had denounced him in public as a thief.

"Cruel and hard was Ivan, whom they called 'The Terrible.'"

The rolling 'bus to-day, with another red-faced

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THE MARBLE ARCH

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driver, has brought me to the end of its route. Here I found still surviving one of those ancient types of road-houses, a quaint old coaching-tavern in which lounged, smoked, and talked a *clientèle* of men who have spent their lives about 'osses. There wasn't a man among them whose hands and knuckles did not show a daily and lifelong handling of the reins. But it was a sign over a rambling old shop adjacent to the tavern which most interested me. Letters of the type of a century ago announced the name of the firm, and below them ran the following:

"Makers of Loo and Hazard tables."

Shade of Smollett! These favorite games of the idle rakes of bygone days. The games of "Loo" and "Hazard," can the memories of even great-grandfathers recall them? Who plays Loo and Hazard to-day? Does the rambling old shop ever get a customer? Yet it is still ready to do business at the old stand. I dare say there are shops in London where one might leave an order for an arquebus. And yet London is undergoing radical changes. This city, built so long ago, is being torn down in many quarters; whole blocks, in fact, have been razed lately to make room for new theaters and other buildings.

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Some of these desolate areas, such as that skirted by the newly opened King's Highway, resemble a vast area wiped out by some recent fire.

It is interesting to note the clever balance between civility and servile politeness among the tradesmen. The moment you are polite to them their manner becomes insolent.

I found types like these among every class from the dry-goods clerk to an expert shoemaker. The proprietor of a small and evidently long-established shop on the Strand, aproned and bare-armed, had endeavored to extract nearly fifty shillings from me in exchange for a pair of hunting-boots. The price for the boots was excessive, and I hinted the fact to him with some clearness. He waxed aggressive in his assertion that he could make as good a boot as any man in England, and if I wanted second-class work I had better go to one of those American shoe shops where they sold ready-made trash. The term "ready-made" set him talking as satirically as a barber over a safety razor, whereas the truth is that thousands of well-to-do Englishmen to-day buy their hunting-boots ready-made in the scores of ready-made-

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shoe shops that have in the last few years found a firm foothold in London.

I have tried two ways of treating the shopkeeper. The Englishman's way is the only one possible.

If the sun shines you will find Hyde Park thronged with private equipages, yet these broughams and turnouts have but little glitter or smartness about them. For the most part, the private turnouts in this select rendezvous have a certain old-fashioned conservativeness about them even to the liveried coachmen and grooms. Many of the family carriages are of ancient pattern, and the horses lack the style one sees in the Bois de Boulogne or Budapest. Only now and then a stylish little cob paces by, mounted by some old fellow taking his daily constitutional.

Contrast Hyde Park with the Bois de Boulogne. Hyde Park is flat and formal. Some of it, however, reminds one of portions of New York's Central Park. Even its famous "Marble Arch" is an unimpressive and much-undersized gateway. Hyde Park is essentially a park for aristocracy to take the air in. Many of them have but to step to it from their superb dwell-

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A SUNNY AFTERNOON IN HYDE PARK.

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ings facing it. It is a breathing-ground of fine lawns and sturdy trees, of neat walks and broad drives, but it is not a feathery green fairyland like the Bois de Boulogne, of wild wood and water, of hills and dales, of green alleys and little brooks, and of *chic* restaurants and cafés. This mundane arcadia of Paris is as unlike its English sister as black is unlike white. Hyde Park is a staid, open-air *promenoir* for people of wealth. No public vehicle may pass its gates, and one feels like putting on one's best manners when entering, and seeing that one's hat has not been rubbed by some clumsy beggar in passing.

The other night found me at a popular concert, one of those perfectly trained orchestras massed upon a vast stage that, if late, we tiptoe into a back seat to hear, as quietly as if we were attending a funeral. There was no gainsaying as to the precision with which they rendered the the classical program. They were precise, and played with intelligence and healthy good-will, but they lacked *temperament*, fire, emotion, without which no musician can ever hope to impress an audience. It was an orchestra admirably fitted to the phlegmatic and unemotional race of people to whom it played.

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If you would see the "London gigolette," the flower-girl, you must go to Covent Garden market. You will see her on market mornings busy with her buttonhole "bokays" for the day. She is only one of many types around this redolent old market reeking in mud, cheese, and green vegetables, rare fruit, and excellent meat, too. In fact, the best that comes to London can be had in this slimy old place of barter and sale. Here too there are some hard-looking types of market hands and loungers; brawny fishwomen, coarse and good-natured, but with a ready wit and a command of Billingsgate all their own. But among this *mélange* of mud, carts, cabbages, noise, and odor, as a type the flower-girl is the most interesting. Her bedraggled skirts, her black-fringed shawl, her worn, cracked shoes, seem somehow in keeping with her grubby, grinning face, framed by two oily curls of jet-black hair, half hiding her coarse, earringed ears. Her eyes, vicious as they are, still possess more merriment, more *gaminerie* in their depths than any other type I have seen here, and are shaded by a creation of a hat made up of black straw and a muss of feathers, one large plume, the more bedraggled of its mates, overtowering the rest as

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a final touch to this queen of the gutter. For it is along the gutter the girl and her basket live, selling her wares with a word for every one who falls within the radius of her strident cry of "'Ere y'are, fine market bunch!"



THE FLOWER GIRL

If anything has ruined the general aspect of a London thoroughfare more than another the vast multitude of advertising signs may be said to have accomplished it. They are of all sizes, all colors and descriptions, glaring yellow placards, sickly blue boards, red and grass-green, plastered over every square foot available upon old and new buildings alike, and providing a multi-colored covering for motor and omnibuses. Among this panoramic labyrinth of raw color and staring letters no single one attracts the eye.

The London thoroughfare is composed of two

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levels, that of the sidewalks and that of the 'bus-tops. So compact is the ceaseless traffic in some of the busy thoroughfares that, seen from the windows above, the road-bed is completely blotted out, and all one sees is the level of the maze of 'bus-tops and the traffic between.

"Dirty Dick's!" remarked my 'bus driver. "Ever ere tell uv Dirty Dick's? It wuz just in there as we wuz passin', a rum sort of plice. They tell 'ow the cobwebs 'adn't been swept off the ceilin' till they wuz a-'angin' down like curtins. There wuz three fellers once wagered to drink a hundred pots of beer in Dirty Dick's! One got to a hundred and one and died; the second e' died, 'e did; but the third 'e lived. They got the picters of the three of 'em hung in there over the tap."

We jogged on. Suddenly he pointed with his whip.

"This used to be Seven Dials. Rough place in the old days, sir, but it's all chainged now."

To modernize such a popular old dining resort as Simpson's on the Strand is to ruin it. To-day this famous grill stands renovated from roof to cellar. I do not know what it once was, except that it had an enviable reputation for

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grilled kidneys, chops, and things, but to-day, like many others, it has been installed with a beautifully designed white room. It evidently preserves a few of its ancient customs, as that of putting the early and the late comer at the same table. This is a pest one is supposed to put up with in railway buffets and cheap oyster houses, but in an establishment of such reputation and such prices it was amazing.

Here, too, were English waiters. They were a slow, badly trained lot of cockneys, quick to have been insolent had they been given the chance. I can truthfully say I had no worse dinner in London, more poorly served upon a much-bespotted cloth (that after some effort was *hidden* by a clean one), than I had at this newly installed grill of ancient reputation. Its *clientèle* (it being Sunday evening) was not made up of the distinguished *bon vivants* I had been led to imagine would be there, but in their stead were a very respectable collection of young clerks in their Sunday best with their best young girls. I could have dined for less and far better in any of the grills of the smart hotels. It is an old adage that the best place is the cheapest.

Even in one of the most expensive restaurants

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Arrangement with W. Thacker & Co., London.

[Drawn by Phil May.]

'ARRIET

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in Paris, if not in the world, the Café Anglais, the late George Augustus Sala (and no man was a better authority, or knew his Paris better) found a moderate-priced *maison* for one who has had experience. There are so many restaurants which feed you upon their decorations; as for the rest, you may be sure that the cheapest in the market, including their wine, is given you in exchange for a set price which you may also be sure is nine-tenths profit to them. In places like these in pour the sheep, gulled by the orchestra, the decorations, the olives, and the lights, and no one is permitted to see the kitchen.

How modest are the interiors of some of the oldest Parisian restaurants, what spotless linen, what perfect service, what careful marketing, for the freshest and best obtainable at the Halles goes to their modest kitchens; what wine slumbers within their caves!

The other night, while dining in a private room in an ancient London restaurant (and an excellent one it was), roars of laughter suddenly echoed forth from the adjoining corridor. "Sir William!" cried a dozen sturdy voices, "you may come in; we're ready!"

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Sir William, a merry old Englishman, with the head of a veteran ambassador, had been, I discovered, exiled to the corridor by the rest. The door had been closed upon him. It was no less than an old-fashioned guessing game that these merry old grandfathers were playing and hugely enjoying at the end of their jolly dinner, and Sir William was "it."

A moment later fresh roars of laughter and bravos greeted Sir William's guess, and some other old comrade went out to wait until the others, after much whispering, hailed him in to the test. Here were these goodly old gentlemen at a stag dinner playing at children's games! There was a healthy simplicity, a love of home about it that was charming, or a firm belief in the memories of childhood, or had they reached their second childhood? You would not have thought so, had you taken in at your leisure, as I was fortunate enough to, each healthy old gentleman as he filed out, got into his great-coat, and went home at a seasonable hour to bed. The majority of them were of that sturdy intellectual type of aristocracy to whom a nation may turn in a great crisis. What more refreshing sight could have culminated a good din-

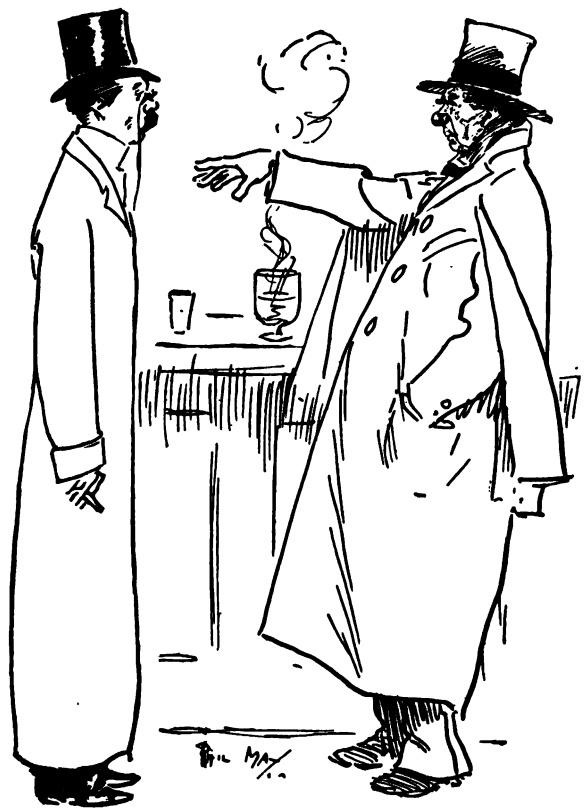
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ner! One had only to look at them to be convinced that within their estates and manors lived peace, charity, and good-will.

Tucked away in a side street off the Strand is a modest window flaunting an oyster shell of such gigantic size that one wonders whether it did not find its way from the property-room of the Drury Lane Theater close by, rather than the deep sea. Behind the oyster shell you will discover a dingy little tap-room whose walls are covered with old prints of the stage. This is "Rules."

Having squeezed your way past a group of fat actors and lean song-and-dance men chatting in the tap-room, you penetrate to a back parlor, dimly lit and partly hung in dusty red plush and furnished with small tables, easy-chairs, and divans. If the clock has struck five of an especially gloomy afternoon, you will find this parlor filled with more Thespians. The pale, shaggy-browed, curled, and oiled tragedian over in the corner is in impressive conversation with a short bullet-headed little man, a famous old clown. The tragedian crosses his bony knees, unbuttons his shiny frock coat, and regards the bullet-headed little man beneath his bushy eyebrows.

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Arrangement with W. Thacker & Co., London.

[Drawn by Phil May.]

"I TELL YOU, I KNOW THE WORLD"

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"Over their heads!" he exclaims hoarsely with a gasp. "Would that you, me boy, had supported me in Richard!" He lowers his voice, for a girl in a cheap petticoat and three thumb rings has swept past his lean knees to join three other vaudeville sisters at a near-by table.

"Bah!" whispered the tragedian, "what must we support when we are forced to play against women like her sister!"

"A fine dancer," ventured the old clown.

"Granted, my boy, but zounds, man, had you seen her in the Castle scene. 'Twas but an imposition upon an honest actor. Hello, Clara!"

"How are yer, Tony? The baby better? That's good. Myrtle well?"

"Your song? last week, yes, Mrs. Fenshaw was a-tellin' me. She 'eard it, dearie. She's doin' fine, thanks. A quid a week."

A gentleman with cuffs, a hero, now strolls in among the crowded tables.

"Hello, 'Arry," cry a dozen, "when did you get back?"

"Hello, Madge!"

"Why, hello, 'Arry, you're quite a stranger!"

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"God save us!" growls on the tragedian, catching sight of the newcomer. "Egad, Harry, but thou art a welcome sight! How is the wife—my regards to the missus," and he waves to the disappearing hero who goes in search of a comfortable corner and a pint of bitter.

Here and there, within the smoky little parlor, sit chatting in little groups the people of the profession. Fat, happy-go-lucky old ladies who have played in their active, struggling lives everything from a child fairy to a witch. Robust comedians, joking and guffawing, juveniles sporting gaudy waistcoats, bedraggled little *ingénues*, flossy little blondes ever ready for any engagement and with a hauteur about them that makes one wonder how they ever get one; two more prosperous-looking trapeze brothers fresh from a matinee at the Empire, broad-shouldered and stockily built; next to them, a brutal, swarthy, ponderous Jew, evidently an agent whom a pale-faced, nervous little woman is talking earnestly with over a possible engagement and which the old brute finally consents to see about, for she goes off smiling to her lodgings in Bloomsbury or Soho. All these fill the little parlor, whose walls, like those of the

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tap-room, are hung with prints and portraits of celebrities of the stage.

A narrow flight leads from the tap-room to the floor above, and here in a rectangular room plastered with more rare prints is the restaurant, where one may get an excellent dinner, the only thing surprising about it being the price. Or is the restaurant intended only for the gilded youth about town to invite the lady with the blond wig and the thumb rings to dine? I am quite sure my own bill at the end of a modest repast would have gone far toward paying the weekly salary of even the tragedian below stairs.

It is a cruel business, this struggling for a living upon the London stage, a struggle in an overcrowded profession which at best means to thousands a tragic fight to live. Possibly in no city in the world is such a career fraught with as much misery as in London—the effort to conceal the often desperate and immediate need of money among the poorer of the profession, forced as they are to be as well dressed as possible; the "bluff" they are forced to make to keep afloat among their fellows; the long weeks of waiting for employment. The fact that rarely if ever husband, brother, sister, wife, or child can keep

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together or call any spot on earth "home," is a tragic thing to realize. With their whole lives given to the unnatural and the artificial, it is no wonder that few actresses or actors ever retain a natural manner of gesture, thought, or voice. They are always acting, consciously on the stage, and unconsciously off it.

That is why the handsome "villain" who has just entered the tap-room and found a letter awaiting him plucks it dramatically from its niche and slaps it open with precisely the same gesture he does in the second act when he discovers the missing will.

My friend Jerry, the fat actor, stood wiping his ever-perspiring brow in front of the polished taps one afternoon when he caught sight of me in the crowded little room. Good old Jerry who, having greeted me with a roaring chuckle, started in to let his imagination take its dramatic course! He was always so terribly in earnest that his tallest lies seemed plausible.

"My boy!" he exclaimed with a grandiose air, "you say you are interested in circuses? in wild animals and their trainers. Magnificent sight, eh? a roaring Bengal in his cage. I was in the cages myself once, nearly eight years

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of it when a youngster, and nearly lost me life. And let me tell you, I've not seen yet the woman or man I could not conquer by sheer force of will. You should have seen my 'Gladiator.' The people went wild—a great hit."

"When I was a boy," he went on, clearing his throat, "when I was a boy," he bellowed, as a manager passed, that the august personage might catch the fine resonance of his voice, "my uncle had a private menagerie on his estate, and there I began to train for the love of it, when a mere lad, and many's the time I'd give me little exhibitions" (he choked at the thought, until his red puffy cheeks half hid his small beadlike eyes). "I'd put the tigers and the bears through their paces to the delight of the tenants, and when I grew up, long before I entered the legitimate, mind you, I was with the old Wombwell show." He drew one fat, moist white hand emblazoned with a turquoise and a dull diamond ring over his perspiring brow, leaned his dripping umbrella against the bar, and pushed his silk hat farther back upon his close-cropped hair.

"My uncle was a great hunter too," he went on. "He's dead long ago, poor chap, but, my

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Arrangement with W. Thacker & Co., London. [Drawn by Leonard Linsdell.]

OUTSIDE COVENT GARDEN. A MASKED-BALL NIGHT

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boy, we've been good pals and I'd like to give you a little souvenir as a keepsake, a knife with which my uncle once, single-handed, killed a tiger in India—an enormous brute."

The next day he brought the knife to me wrapped in a sheet of *The Dramatic News and Sporting Gazette.*

It was a huge bowie-knife a foot long, with a stag-horn handle. It was good of Jerry, and we had a glass in silence over it to the memory of the uncle, and he received my profuse thanks with a gesture as dramatic as he had used to describe the desperate encounter and narrow escape of his relation.

It would have been cruel to have drawn his attention to the fact that the blade had never been sharpened and bent like lead under pressure. I wonder to what property-room it belonged and how many heroes and heroines it had slaughtered with that blunt edge in its time.

Is the masked ball a thing of the past? Has it gone to the bow-wows like most of the world's gaiety? Verily the *bal masqués* of the Paris opera to-day are a snare and a delusion. They are stupid affairs to which three-fourths of those who go are the daughters of *concierges* and cos-

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tumers whose escorts are culled from the domestic ranks of the restaurants or the *salons de coiffure* on free tickets. All the old magnificence of the *bal masqué* of the Paris opera is now a thing of the past.

Have they met the same fate in London? Yes, indeed. At Covent Garden the masked ball occurs fortnightly from October to the commencement of the opera season, but it is the same old story of decline. The house itself is brilliant enough with its vast interior festooned in lights and its exterior animated, and with the long line of carriages arriving after midnight with the usual crowd of pierrots, monks, columbines, mephistos, sailors, jesters, and various grades of fairies in semi-transparent gowns and cotton tights. Faithful old costumes, how many times have you been dragged out to hire from the musty boxes of cheap costumers and stuffed back again after the sun has risen and the weary and reckless are gathering their wits and coaxing their appetites after one of these all-night affairs that seldom, if ever, pay for the going!

Magic words, "*Bal masqué!*" smacking of wickedness, and forever and eternally tame.

In nine cases out of ten you go to the Covent

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Garden ball, as the rest of the wise ones do, in a dress coat. As for your pocket-book, you will be wise to limit its contents, for you will not be alone with your wealth long in that glittering throng of the tinseled ones who have made it a point to meet you there. You will find plenty of opportunity to get rid of your guineas in flowers or champagne. You may even find the artful loitering within the lobby "waiting for a friend" and archly loathful to pay their own entrance guinea providing you are gallant enough to pay it; and why not you as well as any one else?

A well-ordered affair is the Covent Garden ball, too well ordered to be riotously gay; the police see to that. If you have been among the faithful, you will have yawned with the rest at daybreak. I do not say that you will not have gathered memories; a pretty woman is forever new, and there have been many here, and the colors and costumes, the laughter and merriment have done their share to keep you awake.

You have danced. Now it is broad, foggy daylight and you must pay the fiddler. Here and there, straggling out into the chill, are others to whom the night is still young and whose gold is not yet gone.

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CHAPTER VIII

Where London Laughs

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Where London Laughs



THE London music-hall is the mother of vaudeville developed through decades of experience and generations of tradition. These traditions which have crept into the English variety show are as faithfully adhered to and as popular to-day with gallery and pit as they ever were.

There is hardly a season without its list of new sensational acts more original and more startling than the year before, but these must be surrounded upon every program by some of the good old-fashioned "turns" without which the new dish would lack a good sauce. I am speaking now of the "Halls" of the people.

Drop into the Pavilion some afternoon for nothing better, if you will, than to see again the old stand-bys. Here are the good old turns in plenty waiting until you are comfortably set-

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tled in your stall, when they will greet you. The curtain has just rung up on a dark wood scene and a glass tank filled with swashing emerald water. Where is that veteran expert swimmer? Ah! here he is, grown a little stout and gray, a dozen more medals having been added to the glittering collection on his stalwart chest. Of course it's he. It couldn't be otherwise. You haven't seen him perhaps in ten years, but he's here again bowing to an applauding house as he introduces a veritable mermaid as beautiful as she is classic, young, and graceful.

"Miss Meredith and myself," he announces in a water-soaked voice, "will bring to your kind attention this afternoon various feats of graceful swimmin', divin', and remainin' under water in the act of eatin' and sleepin', concludin' with my original feat of pickin' up coins from the bottom of the tank with my hands tied." All of which happens in the next twenty minutes to the accompaniment of a slow waltz and a ray of calcium light.

A little later on comes the Scotch comedian, with a head full of stories in a dialect wholly unintelligible to any but a London audience, but which keeps the gallery and pit in a roar,

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followed by three nimble sisters who speak English and know fifty jig steps. You will never be able to catch a word of what they say, but your feet will be kept in a patter with their clever dancing.

And now the stage is noisy with a pack of yelping, big and little, grave and gay poodles, serious mastiffs, and scampering fox terriers, each rushing to his respective stool.

Again the curtain descends and rises, this time upon a gaudy little parlor containing three kitchen chairs, a screen, and a table with a vase of wax flowers. Before you know it the inevitable married couple, the meek husband and the fat, candy-haired wife, have laid the plot for a domestic quarrel. And how they quarrel! It was by a wretched circumstance that the meek husband, having at last a night out alone, has been discovered by his termagant of a better half at the local masked ball. "And who were you, I'd like to know, when I married you?" smites the air and raps at the drum of your ears as of yore.

"Well, I never!" shrieks his wife. "You'll pay for this, you villain; and let me tell you, Simon Bumblebee, that the next time——" roars

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out upon your innocent head like a torrent of hail.

You're glad you're not Simon Bumblebee. That's what makes you pound and chuckle and applaud with the rest.

"That's good!" chokes a red-faced old man in the next seat, who has evidently had plenty of marital experiences, while an equally red-faced woman behind you slaps one coarse, jeweled hand across her mouth and the other to the center of her shapeless waist and rocks and wheezes in merry pain.

"Oh, dear! Oh, dear!" she cries at last, able to catch a quarter of her breath.

Simon Bumblebee has at last asserted his rights. If you don't believe it, look upon the stage. Simon is laying the law down to his better half; he's brandishing a poker and with the stentorian voice of a lion-tamer is enjoying the wrenlike apologies of Mrs. Bumblebee. He's even going back to the ball, when suddenly the two old veterans in fun join hands and bow to the descending curtain. They have worked hard, and they must hurry off, wash up, and rush back for a bite in their modest home before the evening performance.

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Arrangement with W. Thacker & Co., London.

[Drawn by Frank Reynolds.]

A FAMOUS COMEDIAN OF THE HALLS.

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Good old turns, what would the halls be without you?

London is rich in music-halls. They are of every degree and for every class, but there is only one queen of music-halls among them, the Empire, and her supremacy in the even excellence of her program and the comfortable luxury of her establishment remains paramount among the music-halls of the world. You may have dropped into the Alhambra or The Pavilion, both near-by neighbors, gone in for a laugh at the Tivoli, or found your way to a cheaper front seat in the smokier and plainer halls of the East End, but you will in none of these have seen anything that approaches the perfection of the Empire. It stands for all that is best in vaudeville or spectacular ballet. To this brilliant house of amusement come the best talent obtainable in the variety world. Up its broad stairways, into its turquoise-blue and white and gilt auditorium, and up to its gay *promenoir* come nightly the best and worst of idle London, including every stranger, be he Hindoo or Hottentot, Russian or French, for there are far more people that know of the Empire than ever heard of the National Gallery or Westminster Abbey.

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If you have dined, follow the throng. You will find that at the Empire there are no poor acts; that the ballet is an artistic production, the scenery and costumes being especially well done, and that the seats are as spacious and comfortable as the ones in your own club.

To-night the *promenoir* is crowded. Between the acts you move about among those promenading. All the women here are of a type more gorgeously gowned and jeweled than any you remember to have yet seen in the similar *promenoirs* of the lesser halls. They stand about idly in groups or singly, preserving that unobtrusive reserve, according to the law governing their nightly deportment toward duke or tourist, until invited to talk, when they develop a repartee and a thirst which are amazing.

Leaning with her elbows on the balcony rail and peering down into the vast auditorium shimmering in a haze of smoke and electricity, stands a lithe woman in a brilliant gown of scarlet. She hums to herself a refrain from the waltz the big orchestra has just finished playing. Ah! now she is talking to a gentleman. It was possibly her reserve which attracted this smart young blood. Her dark eyes regard his own

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demurely, eyes that might once have caused trouble in Rumania. The woman is a skilled actress, a past mistress in the art of hypnotism. The little blonde just beneath the electric light beyond possesses a *retroussé* nose and a mouth full of gleaming teeth as white as the pearls at her throat. She is Holland Dutch; she too is preserving her dignity like the rest, while her gray eyes search the throng for a gilded fool who will think her jolly enough to proceed to the glittering little bar opposite and open a bottle. In the mean time she stands waiting, and glances down occasionally at the performance, which is, of course, as old a story to her as it is to the esthetic maiden ladies in empire gowns and lace caps who see you safely to your stall and sell you a program.

Again the curtain is up and a swinging, snappy march heralds a family of acrobats. Those in the *promenoir* crowd against the rail to watch them, for they are well worth seeing. Applause! A clever trick that! Hello, the oldest girl in the family of nimble tumblers is limping. The drums roll and the trombones blare as she pluckily climbs to the neck of the topmost of the three brothers standing on

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each other's shoulders. Here she braces her feet carefully and bends her finely trained body backward for the double somersault that, if nicely calculated, will land her upright upon the shoulders of her stronger sister ready to receive her upon the mat below.

A second's pause.

Up! she whirls in her pink fleshings, her knees gripped tight to her chin! In a flash she lands upon her sister's shoulders and is nodding to a well-earned applause.

Instantly the nimble family become whirling pinwheels, but as they leave the stage at the finish of the act the eldest sister is limping badly.

An intermission, and the curtain rises upon the ballet pantomime, "The Bugle Call." The first scene, representing the courtyard of a Norman hostelry a century ago, is as charming a bit of staging and as clever a piece of scenic art as modern stage-craft can produce. The gables and thatched roof, the mellow vista seen through an adorable old gateway half smothered in vines that have run wild over crevice and stone, the carefully studied costumes of the Norman peasantry and the masterly style in which this scene is lighted and, which is more important, shaded,

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make one doubt if the Marigny or Opéra Comique in Paris has ever produced anything better. This *ensemble* is a fitting setting to that present idol of London, Mlle. Adeline Genée, the *première danseuse* who in the trimmest of bugle-boy costumes (and they can be very trim at the Empire) is now whirling her way in the midst of the merry peasantry. You have never seen anything quite like her before; she is unique, this finished *danseuse*. There are an intelligence and a refinement about her whole personality, and with these she dominates the stage. She is not only a very great dancer, but a pantomimic actress who unfolds the entire plot of the piece to you. The whole gamut of human emotions seems either at her finger-tips or her toes. It is difficult to tell which, but they are there nevertheless, and in such lightning, rhythmic succession that they hold you fascinated during every moment she is on the stage. Few dancers in England have been granted the honor to be bidden by order of His Majesty, the King, to dance at Windsor, yet to Mlle. Genée the royal household afforded an ovation.

This must be a very unapproachable and proud lady, I thought to myself as the curtain

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MLLE. ADELINE GENÉE.

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fell, and I pondered whether if I wrote a note and asked for an interview my request would meet the same fate as the bouquets of the chappies in the front row. But in this I was mistaken, for I found myself at an appointed hour the next morning following the heels of an official down a pair of iron stairs and along a corridor to a cozy, newly papered box of a dressing-room containing a cheerful gas-log fire, a chintz curtain hiding some ballet skirts and frou-frous, a dressing-table, two chairs, and last, but not least, the artist whom I had come to congratulate and with whom I spent a delightful hour. It was a pleasure to meet this refined, modest, gracious, and fair-haired little woman who hails from Denmark, who speaks five languages as fluently as her own, and who since the age of five has worked incessantly until she is mistress of her art, the art of telling a story by gesture, dance, and pantomime. Some day Adeline Genée will interpret those ballets which have become classic in the great opera-houses of the world. At present she is delighting critical London, and that for one fair young woman is not an easy task.

As I took my leave the narrow corridor re-

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verberated with the chorus of a Wagnerian opera being rehearsed on the stage overhead, and a black cat with a tinkling bell trotted ahead of me. In a few hours these stairs would be running over with chorus girls, acrobats, and stage hands. The Wagnerian opera-singers will have given way to trick bicyclists, the tumbler, the ventriloquist, and the spectacular ballet, and the gracious little Dane will dominate them all.

Cater-cornered with the Empire on Leicester Square stands its rival, the Alhambra Music Hall, with its gilded Moorish interior. If you are a careful observer you will note that this spacious house of variety is under an excellent management where, as the phrase runs, "Everything is done for the comfort of its patrons." If your seat happens to lie in the path of a draft they will change it with the utmost politeness at the box-office and do everything in their power to make you comfortable. The service of doormen and ushers is irreproachable, the orchestra excellent, and the seats wide and restful, but the performance can not be compared with that at the Empire. It is throughout of a cheaper class.

The ballet contained a goodly scattering of old maids, and its younger members are not of the

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first choice. You will notice too that altho the *promenoir* is gay with the passing *monde* and *demi-monde*, the latter are of a variety gowned for the occasion in cheaper frou-frous and for whose alluring beauty rouge and a black pencil and two drops of belladonna are largely responsible. And yet, all said, you may spend a very pleasant evening at the Alhambra, and the performance, altho made up of cheaper talent than at the Empire, is far from dull, and much of it is excellent.

If you would see a costly and luxurious Colossus of a music-hall go to the Coliseum.

Its auditorium is gigantic in size. Its stage is big enough to serve as a parade-ground for a regiment. Fitted as it is throughout in marble and maroon velvet and mahogany-backed chairs, with its vast galleries sweeping up to the gilt and luster of its great ceiling; with its big orchestra, its two choirs, and its revolving stage, the first glance of this superb house will open your eyes wide. Its vast, rich interior is impressive.

You are astonished too at the moderate prices charged for seats, the cheapest being sixpence, which, despite its moderate price, can be booked in advance, and as you find your own you won-

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der whether the show will be up to the level of all this extravagant gorgeousness.

Here again, as is too often the case in London, there is too poor a show for the magnificence of the theater. The two mixed choirs in costume occupy two vast boxes on either side of the proscenium, where they wait in silence until some mediocre, serio-comic soprano launches forth in "Give my Regards to Leicester Square," when they rise as if at a funeral and give their vocal support in the refrain. Finally a military drill of real soldiers out of a job came as a climax to the variety turns. The multitude from pit to gallery filed out, the giant of a music-hall was promptly closed, and I found myself in a curious old alley standing under the glare of a saffron electric light and surrounded by a crowd of chorus people and stage hands silhouetted black against the flare from this midnight sun.

Does London possess a Bohemia? I can not imagine a more cheerless and unsympathetic city for an art student than this fog-swept, solid town, but despite it all hundreds of students peg away and learn to paint, to sculpt, or to fashion so beautiful a thing as music within this big brutal metropolis. Since there is no "Boul

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Miche" or Luxembourg or Bullier or intime cafés for them to dream away their youth in out of working hours, their *vie de Bohême* must be a practical work-a-day life at best. A few of the more fortunate ones make their escape to the shores of France and find a paradise awaiting them in the Quartier Latin, which, if the truth be told, has sadly changed to a cosmopolitan mundane village, yet still it can afford to those in the pursuit of art a life that no other city on the globe can offer. Being an artist in London must be very much like being a poet in Wall Street.

Yet despite it all there are in London art clubs of a Bohemian character where these good and bad brothers of the brush may gather on certain nights to work first, to criticize next, and to play after. Here occur Bohemian smokers, genial evenings running into early mornings, enlivened throughout by the impromptu "stunts" of its cleverest members. Now a "stunt" may be a story, an imitation, a parody, or a song, and two of the best clubs for these Bohemian smokers are the London Sketch Club and The Langham. Their membership includes, you may be sure, all of the cleverest carica-

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turists, illustrators, and writers in London. Strangely enough, throughout the length and breadth of the Latin Quarter these Bohemian clubs do not exist unless you mention that morgue-like affair known as the American Club, where the tamest and most conservative gatherings occur, from the stiff and formal entertaining of a bishop with lemonade, ballads, and serious piano solos, to a lonely exhibition of the members' work, concluding with a mild dance or a still milder smoker.

And yet the American Club lies in the very heart of the Quartier Latin, where one does only as one pleases from the hour the sun sets until it rises.

In London the art club is a necessity; in the Latin Quarter there are hundreds of intime cafés and other fellows' studios to take its place.

Mr. Arthur Lawrence, in speaking of this quest for a London Bohemia, tells me that "St. Johns Wood is the acme of respectability, and that possibly the King's Road, Chelsea, is the nearest approach to the Quartier Latin in London, but there is not enough 'color' in the artistic life of Chelsea to justify even a one-page leaflet on the subject," and further he adds that

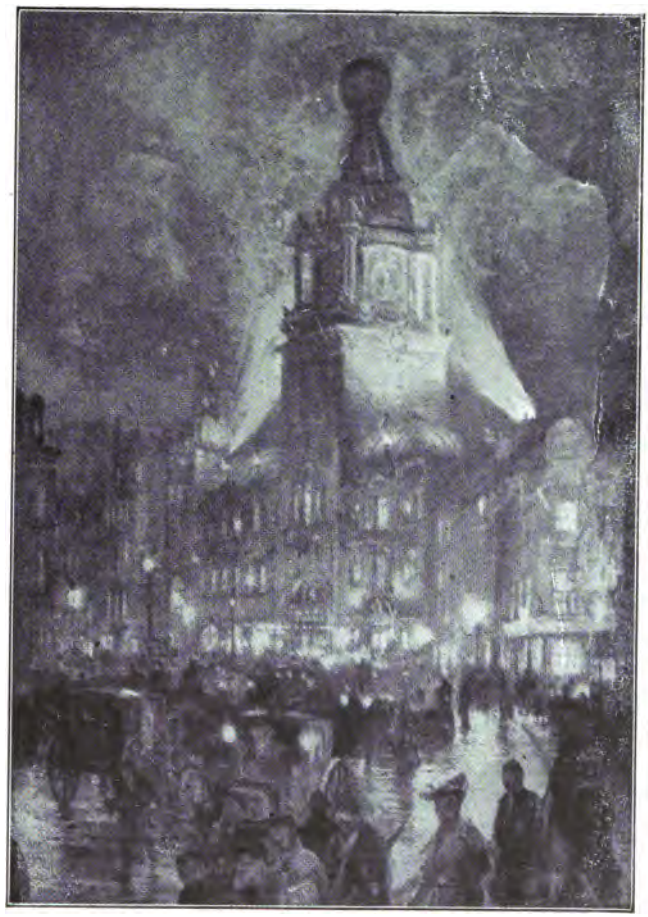
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"he supposes I will be able to delineate some sort of Bohemianism whether I find it or not; my American friends will expect it, and he supposes they will get it." I can not do better then than to quote Mr. Lawrence's description of the Langham Sketching Club:

"Friday nights throughout the season are devoted to the 'Sketching Club.' Two subjects are given, and the sketches or paintings must be completed within two hours. Then comes the 'Show up,' when the work of each member is subjected to the criticism of all the others. Afterward the company, with, perhaps, two or three guests, sit down to a large table on which a wondrous supper consisting principally of beer, ham and pork pies, cheese, and celery is spread.

"At these Friday suppers the visitor who has been invited by an artist friend to take a hand in the pork pie and pickles enters the inner sanctum with some fear and trembling, for, truth to tell, there is a considerable 'squeege,' as Mrs. Gamp would have said, and if he is blessed with a modesty at all equaling my own he will worry himself with the thought that he may be helping to incommode men who have earned their supper by two hours' hard work. The Friday sup-

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A LONDON NIGHT

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per, however, is practically of a private character, but three or four times a year a *conversazione* is held, to which every member brings two or three guests. The walls of both rooms are crowded with pictures mostly of the small gems. The throne in the outer room on which the model is placed does duty as a platform for a piano, and in the inner room the committee table serves as a buffet, and one or two models, generally blessed with more than the average share of good looks, dispense beer and bread and cheese. This part of the program quickly develops into drifting up to the table and helping yourself. The entertainment, which lasts from eight o'clock to the small hours, is, so far as my experience goes, the best thing of its kind in London" — and no one knows London better than does Mr. Arthur Lawrence.

As far as my own experience goes I know but few British Bohemians. In Bohemia they play the part of the spectator. English blood lacks the adaptability of the Latin. Englishmen are seldom Bohemians *au fond*. No matter if three-quarters of their lives have been passed in the Quartier Latin, they remain in thought and character British to the end, amused at the

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show, seldom, if ever, a part of it. Their *camaraderie* is of a reserved and formal character. If you appear to them as exceedingly well-bred and as reserved as themselves, they may mistake you for an Englishman and not as belonging to an inferior race. I am speaking of the average, not of such good old Bohemians as the late Phil May. I have never yet seen a Frenchman and an Englishman *pals*.

Long live the Langham! Long live anything informal in London!



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CHAPTER IX

About Some Things in Particular

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CHAPTER IX

About Some Things in Particular



MY friend's estate lay within two miles of London. I noticed that the guard, as he locked the door of my compartment, saw that no one else was put in with me. If my destination was this certain village and I was accompanied by a trunk, it could be that I was going to no other house than that belonging to the highly titled and simple young fellow whose ancestors dated back to the eleventh century! It is surprising how they take care of you on

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these English railways. The railway officials are as polite to you as if they were in your employ; no check is given you for your trunk; you simply claim it by designating which one in the baggage van is yours on arrival. This system would not be a success, I fear, in any other country. There is a rugged honesty about these people which is a delight to see. Imagine claiming your baggage thus in America! Each train would hold its complement of crooks. In Spain it would be even more impossible. I traveled on Spanish expresses not many years ago, at the rate of thirty miles every four hours and a half, where the conductor stopped to smoke cigarettes with a roadside acquaintance. On these trains there were two soldiers in every car to protect the passengers in case of a hold-up, a frequent occurrence in those days, despite the fact that the line was guarded by soldiers. In the baggage-car were two more soldiers to see that the baggage-master in charge did not rob the mail-sacks or help himself to the contents of the trunks.

It is a delight to see the way they run things in England. The laws of this solid civilization are enforced to the letter, and the people are full of God-fearing respectability.

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I was thinking of these things as we slipped into the station, a quarter of an hour's brisk drive from my friend's estate. A moment later we were trotting through a quaint village, past



A PEACEFUL LITTLE INN

the butcher, the baker, and the harness-mender; past the humble home of the vicar; past a vine-covered church; past a peaceful little inn; past stray people along the road who drew aside and touched their hats as the trap of my host sped on to his country home.

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In America we live in public places. Some of us are pigeonholed in gigantic apartment-houses; others in rented suburban homes; while many of us build from houses chosen from a colored catalog. Or if we suddenly grow rich we summon an architect on the telephone and tell him to get busy and build a home. Rush out architect and buy gobelins and Italian wells and statues enough to go round. Hustle up a pergola; do it all at once and do it expensively. My contract calls for an ancestral estate by the first of May—complete library, polo amphitheater, swimming-pool, vaudeville theater, automobile garage, and golf links. Make it look as old as possible and spread out the Italian garden until it looks as if it cost money. If you can't get the real thing in the way of statuary and marble seats, get copies. As to pictures, I've made a separate contract with a dealer—say a dozen old portraits of people in ruffs, with greyhounds, for the marble hall. Get an orchid-house—my wife likes 'em. Call it Wildmere Manor when you get it done, and send me the bill.

In England ancestral estates are not built to order. The great houses, whose massive walls

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have stood, cared for and respected, through generations of descendants, shelter the young lord to-day as they will shelter his grandchildren and *their* grandchildren. Many of these established country homes are free from that ostentatious show which so often characterizes the American country-seat and which is not lacking in France in the reconstructed châteaux of the *nouveau riche.*

There are some strange freaks of modern architecture in France. In the case of Monsieur Toupin, who made his fortune as an honest merchant in cured hides, and straightway bought a few acres by the sea, close to the edge of a roadway, that the passing public in automobiles might see his purchase, you might with the naked eye see Monsieur and Madame Toupin almost any bright day strolling about upon their horrid little lawn studded with imitation rocks and provided with a rustic wash-basin containing a lazy school of goldfish.

Upon this *chef d'œuvre* Monsieur and Madame would stand and gaze up in admiration at their awful house, a mixture of pill-box cupolas, gay in blue majolica tiles and weird ornaments running down to a base of inverted *nouveau* art, of

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impossible columns and arches, fashioned, no doubt, after the furniture in the bazaar of the Hôtel de Ville. On Sundays and fête days Monsieur and Madame Toupin would be honored with a guest, Monsieur Florin, the sole proprietor of a new brand of absinthe. Short, stout, florid little Madame Toupin in a magenta wrapper, gay old Toupin, and the overfed Monsieur Florin would pass the whole of the sunny afternoon before this ideal of the Toupin family.

I remember too a somewhat similar family mansion in America. In this instance it was the proud conceit of a respected soda-water manufacturer who, having purchased a stretch of primeval forest upon the edge of an Adirondack lake, proceeded to build *his* ancestral home. It was, when completed, an exact copy of the marble mausoleum he had already caused to be erected in an expensive and much-sought-after cemetery and which was, I may dare add, an enlarged replica of his prize soda-water fountain. The handles of the doors within his forest home were of the same type that glittered in rows above the little tablets marked "Sarsaparilla," "Lemon," "Orange," and "Clam-broth." He had fashioned his crest as well, a bas-relief of his

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august self with two polar bears fighting their way up his voluminous beard. This *pièce de résistance* emblazoned the great chimney-piece of the living-hall, whose columns and hood were studded with the imitation jewels that had lent Oriental splendor to his prize fountain.

This form of insanity has not yet reached solid England, and it is safe to say that the people, aided by the authorities, would promptly suppress it if it did.

The active little mare that has myself and my luggage in tow is now turning into a noble stone gateway flanked by a vine-covered porter's lodge and leading into an imposing road cut through a forest of giant oaks, a forest of copper and gold leaves, of gnarled trunks bearing their wide-spreading sturdy arms matted with foliage. Round and about these giant trees, beneath a vaporish mist, is spread a carpet of ferns, and everywhere within a few yards of the carriage wheels are rabbits, sleek, long-limbed hares, and pheasants peacefully feeding. Many of these great oaks are from six to eight hundred years old.

We are trotting now through acres of rhododendrons, their polished green leaves wet as if

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varnished with the mist, and now we turn in and out among giant hemlocks and towering pines. There is a quiet dignity, a vastness, a simplicity about this fine old home forest that by comparison makes our hastily constructed and brand new American country-seats seem cheap and tawdry, like the buildings at a fair.

Suddenly a vast sweep of undulating green country rolls away to the horizon. Another feathery curve of roadway, and behold the big house looms into view.

It is of massive gray stone with solid square towers, generous doors and windows, and a comfortable covered porch. The light from a cheery fire illumines the windows of the big drawing-room, and beyond is a spacious conservatory choked with roses, rare orchids, and palms. Two servants in knee-breeches open silently the great oaken doors. Beyond them stands, in a columned hall, that good friend of mine with a hearty welcome, this simple young nobleman, honest, as well-bred as a king, and as free from all artificiality as a Bohemian.

Five minutes later the little mare is under the care of the second groom, a silent valet is laying out my things somewhere up in a great bed-

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AN ENGLISH COUNTRY HOUSE

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room in one of the stone towers, and my host is poking the fire in a cozy den whose walls hold a small arsenal of shot-guns and express-rifles, while I am sunk in a comfortable armchair before the blaze, thoroughly convinced that nowhere in the world is life in a country house so well understood as it is in England.

In England are many superb estates whose houses have been added to or reconstructed. But the reconstruction has not been achieved with the speed we are accustomed to in America. They rebuild slowly in England and with a view that the new part is to stand for all time; walls are given time to settle before the well-seasoned cabinet-work of the rooms is fitted to them or the finished plastering is done. Cracked ceilings and warped paneling as a result are rare. The rebuilding of a great house is taken slowly as a pleasant occupation and is often a work of years.

Just such a house was that of my host. One after another of his antecedents have had a share in its development, and during it, more than once, some hitherto secret passage or staircase has been discovered. Imagine, if you can, the life this distinguised old house has seen in its days. Twice for a period of its life it has

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housed and warmed a king. The first king that made it his home was George IV., so that I was not surprised that my shoe closet led to a narrow spiral flight leading to a window cut in the massive wall which my host informed me commanded an excellent view of the passageway and afforded a safe ambush from which to take in at one's ease before they entered the king's chamber those who came for an audience with His Majesty. How many plots and conspiracies have been nipped in the bud by the aid of this hidden window?

The second King that took it unto himself for a country home was Edward VII. But in these days of peace at home there is no need for hidden windows or secret passageways. England fights her battles fairly, and there is no mystery about her good modern King. Things in England are above-board, and the King's life is that of any honest gentleman.

Verily the country home of my friend is a kingly sort of house, a house with a spacious square hall whose marble pillars uphold a broad gallery reached by a wide sweeping staircase and lit by a ceiling with a glass dome. The corridors are wide; the great bedrooms have high

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ceilings and are furnished with noble furniture of mahogany and high-post bedsteads carved and canopied. The bedrooms are all height, silence, and shadow, in which one dresses by candle-light.

But it was not the bedroom that attracted me. I found the gun-room hard by my host's den an endless source of delight. Within its cabinets were ranged rows of rifles, from a gleaming heavy-calibered tiger-rifle to a slim and small-calibered one for rooks. Here, too, were rows of field-guns; smart little sixteen bores for covert shooting, long-barreled duck-guns; twelve bores from the hands of celebrated makers, all of which had served him well in many a pheasant drive where the day's bag for half-a-dozen guns mounted up into the hundreds of birds. "Ripping shooting," as Reggie used to say. Even as I stood looking this private arsenal over a dozen golden pheasants and a score of sleek hares were feeding within a few yards of the gun-room window. Since most of my life I have been content after a hard day's tramp with a pair of partridges or even a chance shot at a rabbit after floundering all day through marsh stubble or timber, this exhibit of live game within

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a distance that one might toss the stump of a cigarette was a revelation, and yet I must confess that to have opened fire on them would have been very much like beginning a massacre in a neighbor's poultry-yard. With us in America we are content to bestir ourselves long before daylight and take a trail soaking wet with mud and drenched moose-hopple so that by dawn we may reach some still water and a well-known runway. Here we used to lie in wait day after day for the faintest note of some faithful hound who might drive a buck our way.

Or if it happened to be a question of partridges, we were content to wade streams, crawl through briers, and scramble over fire slash and windfall, often alone and without a dog, for a pocketful of birds, or, as was more often the case, none at all. How we used to sit next to the cheese-screen on the worn counter of Freme Gabway's store and listen with wonder to Silas Holcomb's account of "haow four year ago last Octoby he seen a bear cross the road jes' this side of Ed Cummin's sugar bush!" a statement that would be received by the assembled prophets about the stove with "Wall! Wall! I want to know!" With what creepy pride you would lay seven

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partridges on that worn counter after a hard day and receive the general approbation of:

"By gum! You done well!"

It is contrast which gives the keenest delight in life. To gain nothing at all and to win a little, to have had bad luck for weeks and to suddenly stumble upon the best half-hour's shooting of your life, is a golden memory that will cheer you up even when you grow very old and take to your fireside, your carpet slippers, and your favorite chair.

In England shooting is a prearranged and formal function like a dinner party or a ball. You are bidden as a fifth or a sixth gun for a day or four days' shooting. You occupy the stand which is allotted to you and where you make as good a showing as possible with two guns which are kept clean and reloaded and passed to you by your shooting-flunky. When the beaters have started the drive you begin to pop away. If it be a good day and the birds fly well you will be kept as busy as a soldier in battle. You are getting some ripping shooting, and you are working to add as much as possible to the score of the other guests before luncheon and after it.

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The next day the papers will announce that yesterday a magnificent bag was made upon the seat of his Grace the Duke of So-and-So, and when the fellows at the club greet you with, "I say, and did you really have some splendid shooting, old chap, at his Grace's?" you may reply absently:

"Rather," and look bored.

Take, for instance, in comparison our own duck-shooting along the Sound in America.

Your good friend the captain, a simple old sea-giant, who owns a frame house along the shore and several hundred wooden decoys, has just telephoned you to New York that a north-easter is brewing, "a howler," he says, and that the ducks are flying. So you straightway call up the office of your best shooting-comrade, throw your warmest and oldest clothes into your valise, jump into a hansom, and manage after a scramble to catch your friend and the six o'clock evening train, an express with a dining-car, bound for Bridgeport. At Bridgeport an electric trolley whisks you both out to the edge of the Sound. Here the captain's raw-boned horse and rickety buggy are awaiting you. In twenty minutes you are lighting a second after-

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dinner cigar in the captain's snug house. You may have hunted with the captain once before. If so he greets you heartily, and, dropping all formality, calls you by your first name. He tells you that he "expected 'Sam' up, but he's been so busy he couldn't leave nohow, clean druv to death." You learn too that the "Sam" referred to is a man of great wealth and social position and, incidentally, the president of a railroad and the honored friend of several vast commercial and philanthropic enterprises. To the captain he's plain "Sam." He thinks a lot of Sam. Says "he never see no man thet could kill ducks in a bilin' sea 'longside of Sam. Give him half a show and Sam'll git 'em every time."

At ten, having listened to trios of popular songs of the day rendered by the captain's three grown daughters and aided by the resonant notes of a varnished piano purchased by instalments and possessing a bell attachment and four pedals, you and your old friend Billy at ten are lit up to bed by a smoky kerosene lamp held gingerly in the colossal hand of the captain.

It is a plain little room the lamp leads you to, but it is clean and cold, so cold that the crayon portraits hanging askew on its wall (post-mor-

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tem portraits of the captain and his good wife in their younger days) have a film over them, and the water in the pitcher resting upon the cheap wash-set has congealed with a thin covering of ice.

But you are used to this, and you tumble into bed and become oblivious to the temperature.

At four in the morning the captain's big fist is pounding at your door, gently, so as not to wake the "women folks." One daughter and the cheery mother are already up, however, and busily getting breakfast.

As my old friend Bill and I scramble into our clothes we peer out of the little square-paned windows. It is still night, or, rather, a faint glimmering suggestive of blue dawn tells us we must hustle if we would be in time for the early flights of ducks. Moreover, it is snowing and the thermometer is below zero. And so, after a generous and smoking hot breakfast of fried pork, oatmeal, potatoes, and coffee, we get into our heavy coats, draw down over our ears our thick caps, shoulder our guns, and follow the captain and his eldest boy in the direction of the spit of land running out to the booming sea.

The dawn becomes more pronounced. It is

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bitterly cold and the snow crunches under one's heels. Along the storm-swept road the telegraph-poles are humming; a flock of crows rise lazily ahead out of a frozen field.

"Too bad Sam ain't along," remarks the captain, as he bites into a black plug. "We'll git some ducks I'm tellin' ye to-day, boys. I knowed when thet thar wind shifted round yesterday thet we'd git luck with it."

Again he lapses into silence, a stillness broken only by the crunching heels and the hum of the telegraph wires along the road. The road zigzags to the end of a point. Here, too, is a board shanty whose frozen floor is heaped with wooden decoys. With seventy of these loaded in the bows of two shallow rowboats we make for the lea of a rocky breakwater across the bay. This breakwater is a tumbled ridge of massive stones weighing several tons apiece. They are treacherous footholds, covered with green slime and barnacles. But they form a lee to break the wind, and having each selected a sheltered cavern to shoot from, we settle ourselves for the morning sport, being obliged every little while to vacate our chosen rock for one higher up on the pile as the tide rises.

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Half an hour later our flotilla of wooden birds in front of our ambush has become a deadly line to three inquisitive broad-bill ducks.

And now a great flock of broad-bills is undulating like a V-shaped rift of smoke high above us. Now they swing to eastward and settle in a black raft far out of gun-shot. Again we let them have it right and left as a score of whistlers sweep over our decoys. A second later four broad-bills come winging toward us and attempt to light among the wooden stools, flapping their wings mightily to break their impetus, erect, with their fat white breasts and webbed feet spread as they settle.

Bang! bang!—bang! Three are kicking in the tumbling yellow sea. The fourth has swung south like a rocket.

Our flotilla of wooden ducks roll, bob, and rise on the tide. Beyond the breakwater a heavy sea is pounding against the rocks, seething white to the horizon as it leaps before a fifty-mile gale. But we are too busy to care much. At one o'clock we call a halt, take up our decoys, and, gaining the point, tramp home to a hot dinner with the captain and his family, peeling off our heavy coats and slicking

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down our hair for the occasion. There is no formality about an American day's shooting. Even that most able and distinguished personage "Sam" will tell you that.

Or behold the Parisian's shooting in contrast to the Briton's. As the Parisian's happy hunting-ground has been my own for several years, I have had the good fortune to study the Parisian sportsman as a type at my leisure.

Take him within the preserved limits of his own *château*, or, better still, since we are hobnobbing about ducks, take him at Sallenelles, that famous ducking-ground of the Normandy coast. If Monsieur is an ardent shot he will have his own "gabion." This is a low, squat-roofed and turf-covered, box-like affair, looking for all the world like an abandoned ice-house, sunk in the mud at low tide and barely visible above it at high-water. Within this stanchly timbered doll's house are cots, a stove, three chairs, and a larder. The only light, when the door is closed, comes through a narrow slit of an eye protected from wind and rain by a low overhanging eave of an eyebrow. Through this slit are thrust the guns, and before the gabion in

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an artificial pond are tethered by the leg a score or more of live ducks as decoys.

At dusk the Parisian arrives, a heavily bearded *bon vivant*, enveloped in a goatskin automobile coat and a brand new pair of leggings.

But he rarely comes alone. The mystery of the silent marsh and bay at night appeals to his imagination. The weird, shrill cry of sea-fowl seeking food and shelter from the open sea seems to him bizarre, fantastic. So he brings down with him from Paris to his gabion his good friend the Marquis, his thin legs trudging under another ferocious coat of the black bear. Should you happen to be lying low all night for ducks yourself at Sallenelles, you may easily espy in the dusk Monsieur and his friend the Marquis, at low tide, slipping and trudging over the sticky black mud toward their stronghold. If you have but half an eye you will see, too, that they are not alone.

Mademoiselle Gaby de Vere (in sables) is shrieking with laughter close behind them, and following at her pretty heels is Violette de Montmorency, both of the Opéra Comique, both pretty and both as *chic* as a new hat on the Rue de la Paix.

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The stalwart hunters beg them to be quiet lest they scare the game. "S-s-s-h!" whisper mysteriously the four as they near the ice-house of their choice.

Nay, there are more than four in the little procession. There are five! six! seven! That good old fisherman Corbet, with the guns and the dressing-case of Monsieur; and that faithful Bonpard, who lives half the year by deep-sea fishing, is now staggering along under a box containing *patés* from Chiboust, bon-bons, and cakes. Last, but not least, comes Dalbert, jolly old Dalbert, the sailor, his fat arms hugging a small case of the Marquis's favorite champagne.

Eh! voila, c'est tout!

In the morning after the massacre Corbet, Bonpard, and Dalbert will wade out and pick up the ducks—the reward of those who have braved the storm—and later the little party will climb into their waiting automobile and rush back to Paris, where there will occur a dinner at Voisin's, and where the *chef* will receive two louis for cooking the two fishy little ducks that Gaby and Violette so skilfully killed. Gaby has bruised her manicured thumb in closing the breech of a light double gun mounted with her

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monogram in diamonds, and Violette is now binding it up with a lace handkerchief dampened in the vinegar of the salad dressing. As for Monsieur, he was sound asleep long before the ices had been served.

C'est la vie!

Will you follow the Marquis to Sallenelles, accept his Grace the Duke's invitation at Stoneycroft, or telephone that good old Yankee Captain Wicks? For my part, I believe in variety as the spice of life, whether it bring bad luck or good.

There is little formality about Americans when we give functions, put on our best clothes, smother the house in American Beauty roses, and care not for the expense. The first thing the guest does is to seek the most informal corner from which to watch the blow-out. The most popular girl is given the first choice, a screened retreat on the stairs behind a palm. The social lion, having escaped from the crush of supper and ball-room, joins the popular girl. Finally others follow suit, and there are none left but a few scrawny, ever-amiable wall-flowers, for even the sundry old gentlemen are roaring over stale jokes by themselves in the host's

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library. I must confess I never liked women collectively; *en masse* they are a failure.

I remember once a keen-eyed, simple, wiry, withered, and aged multi-millionaire who dwelt in the suburbs of a prosperous coal city. This generous and genial man went into functions because his wife insisted on it and for no other reason. I can not say that this able vender of coal was henpecked, but he resembled thirty cents of stage money beside his velvet-upholstered and diamond-studded better half. The function at which I happened to be his guest was so brilliant that it would have illumined every coal mine in the vicinity. Roses, the driest of wine, the hottest of terrapin, and the biggest of symphony orchestras had been purchased at one fell swoop. Poor old multi-millionaire! He paid the bills, so who cared for him?

I learned incidentally that the little old gentleman in a tight frock coat and plain black tie standing discreetly behind a table at the bottom of the triumphal staircase was the one to whom the guests were indebted, yet they swept by him warmed into laughter and chatter at idle nothings by his wines, welcomed by his roses, fed by his terrapin, and intoxicated by his orchestra.

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It was a pleasure to grasp his hand and draw up my chair beside his own behind the table and thank him for his hospitality.

"What's your name, young man?" he asked, eying me, while a smile puckered his clean-shaven upper lip. And when I told him he chuckled and leaned nearer.

"There's a lot of 'em here I don't know," he confessed. "Myra, she tends to the names. Got a hull list of 'em. When I was a young feller like you I used to go to parties when I took a notion to, now I've got to be on deck rain or shine. What time is it?" he asked with a yawn.

"One o'clock," I informed him. "They are just going in to supper."

"That's good, that's good!" he exclaimed with a sigh. "Mebbe you wouldn't mind joinin' me in a little somethin' to eat. I'll tell John to see we git somethin' up in my library. I don't often git any one to talk to durin' these high jinks. The young folks are generally most too busy amusin' 'emselves."

Over the salad and champagne he told me much of his early life. Like most typical Americans he had by grit, squareness, and good sense

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filled an empty pocket at last with gold, and what he did not know about coal (anthracite) no other man did.

"Come down and see me in the office to-morrow," he said, as the strains of the last waltz floated up the triumphal stairway. "It always seems kind o' homelike down there. I don't let 'em in—'ceptin' friends. We'll have a smoke and I'll show you around the yard."

His democracy was refreshing, a democracy which does not and can not exist in England, and which in France is so universal.

There is little that is hail-fellow-well-met about the Englishman. He is formal even in his humor. He does not say, as many a Westerner will:

"If you ever come down my way you've got to stay with me. Stay as long as you like, and I'll give you the time of your life and the best hunting this side of the Rockies. Bring your friends and stay a year."

In England their hospitality is sincere, but it is of a guarded, stipulated sort, carefully performed, and in the best of good form. The most informal meal is breakfast. When announced the servants withdraw and one helps

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himself to hot plates and the contents of the silver chafing-dishes kept warm upon the sideboard.

There is a wholesomeness about English cooking. Even at formal dinners these generous banquets are composed for the most part of plain food rarely seasoned, or served with rich sauces. Informal as is the breakfast where every one helps himself, the luncheons and dinners served by the silent butler and his first and second man are excessively formal. The table itself, heavily laden with silver and cut glass, seems too large. One does not sit as close to one's neighbor as we do in America or in France. Possibly this has something to do with the lack of exuberance and intimacy among those present.

In France there are few formal dinners. The dinner-table in France is a place to let loose one's spirits, to laugh, to tell stories, to be merry withal. A Frenchman never misses an opportunity to make love with his neighbor, be she pretty, naïve, or interesting. He may never have seen her before, this charming woman he has just taken out to dinner; possibly he may never see her again; but to have lost the oppor-

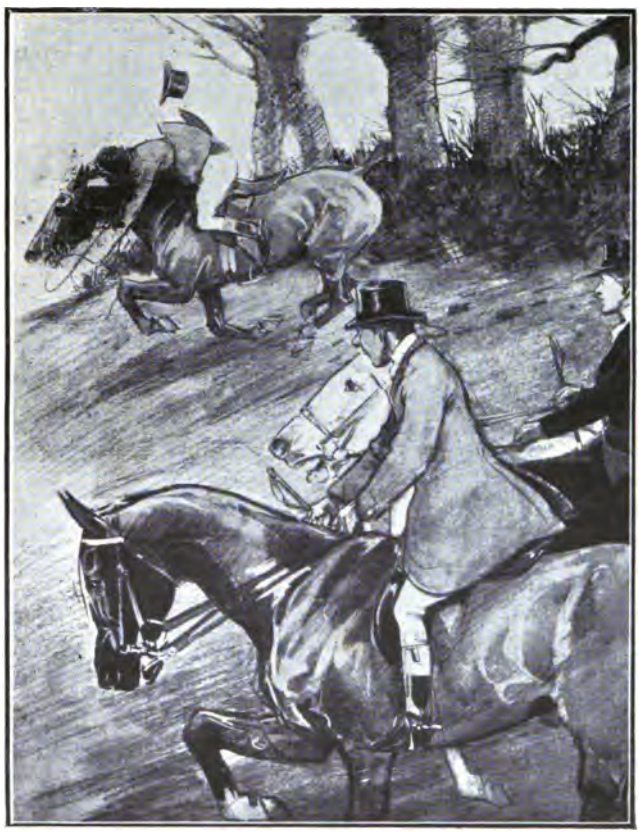
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tunity of making as much love as he dares while he is beside her would seem to him a crime. Having dined well, how thoroughly he enjoys this chance *tête-à-tête!* If she be a Frenchwoman she expects it of him. She is quite safe since they are not alone, and what he says he has by the next dinner forgotten, for a new neighbor is at his right, the pretty wife of a grumpy old bear, an ambassador. Upon this occasion Monsieur is quite serious as he kisses the tips of her soft little fingers and bids her good night.

In England they are not given to this sort of thing in the same way. Possibly when my lady hears that Jack is lying badly shot up from leading a charge in India, she will consent at last to marry him. There is little doubt that he went into the thick of the fight discouraged in his suit, and fought heroically for her. The Frenchman argues "never be in love with one woman, be in love with eight."

My host's stables were as perfect of their kind as one could find throughout England. They formed an enclosed quadrangle, access to which could only be obtained by the oaken doors of a single entrance, wide and high enough to admit a coach. The key to these doors was at all

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"THEY RIDE EARLY AND LATE"

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times in the safe-keeping of the head coachman, and, this barrier being locked at ten at night, wo to the belated stable-boy or tippling groom who came in late and roused his majesty to gain entrance!

These stables were an important establishment in themselves. Ranged about the enclosed quadrangle were various sections, simple, practical, and hygienic in their arrangement, and free from all showy display. Within the main corridor leading to the horse-stalls, harness-rooms, etc., hung two signs, two golden rules, these from the master of the house. One read, "Be kind to all animals," and its mate ran, "Have a place for everything, and keep everything in its place."

Again I must refer to the fact that the stables of my host were not built yesterday. The head coachman had begun life within them as a stable-boy over thirty years ago, and here, too, any stable-boy might rise to be a head coachman. There was nothing about the care or driving of horses that he might not learn within the various departments, even to becoming a skilled veterinary. For in one room were cases of remedies, drawers full of bandages, and glass shelves hold-

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ing an assortment of surgical instruments, while the walls of this repository were hung with charts showing the anatomy of the horse to the minutest detail. And yet my host kept but few horses, less than a dozen for his own use. Six of these lived in a spotless row of stalls faced with dove-gray tiles as being less tiring to their eyes. An automatic heater kept their private suite at a ventilated temperature gaged to a degree under all conditions, and behind their shining hoofs ran a strip of sand as even as if a receding wave had left it spotless upon a beach.

Hard by were clean-smelling box-stalls, and beyond them an isolated infirmary for contagious diseases.

Still further along the quadrangle were the grooms' quarters and their dining-room, and adjoining it the house of the head coachman. Opposite it one entered rooms for bridles; another for saddles. In case my host's guest came with his hunters there were still other suites for their accommodation, and rooms where his horses might have a warm bath after the day's run.

Over one flank of the quadrangle was constructed a glass shed for the waiting carriages

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for the nights when my host thought fit to give a ball.

In the carriage-room were traps, coaches, drags, coupés, and broughams, and one brake which I took for a modern vehicle and which my host explained to me had been but slightly altered since it was presented to his grandfather nearly seventy years ago. It had been honestly built, and is still doing its duty as solid and flawless to-day as the year it was made.

And yet throughout this humane and splendid installation, perfect in every detail, there was, as I say, an unostentatious simplicity that was charming. No wonder any groom having graduated from such a service had but, as my host informed me, to mention his stable as his training-school to obtain a place in any of the best stables in London.

Here was an estate, then, like so many in England, where the servants had grown up on it since childhood.

At the end of a labyrinth of rhododendrons a little old woman is busily picking up the stray twigs that have been blown down during the night. She is very old and wrinkled, and she curtseys as we pass, looking at my host very

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much with the same awe and reverence that Bridget might look at the Pope. Long ago upon this very estate (she was but sixteen then) her dimpled hands churned the best of butter daily and her cheeks were like roses. In those days every young groom fell in love with her, and all this happened long before my young lord's eyes had seen the world over the edge of his cradle. To-day she curtseys to him somewhat in awe, I regret to say.

In France one's faithful servitors become more a part of the family. The *grande dame* has more than once been known to confide in her maid and weep over the shoulder of her old nurse; and the *seigneur* when hard pressed in the vicissitudes of war or romance has found comfort and fresh courage in the confidence of his trusted valet.

In America when we need a cook, maid, or man-servant, we call up the intelligence office on the telephone and await the decision of the domestic. If we pass muster in their eyes we engage them. Or it is more than possible that Mary Ann may not approve of her mistress; in this case Mary Ann, being Irish, will tell her so.

Yet with all this peace and plenty of English

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country life one does not wonder that the young man, forced to mind his P's and Q's within the confines of his parental estate, runs to London for a day or a night whenever he gets a chance. Often the faithful old family butler is his best friend, helping him out of his escapades, even lending the young gentleman a few pounds (at interest) that he may escape for twenty-four hours from the great silent house of his ancestors and the humdrum, staid, and over-respectable little village, to dine at such mundane resorts as the Continental and enjoy to the full an evening at the Gaiety and a night about town. Even a cabby's shelter is a haven of good cheer and rest after a period of family prayers and formal dinners. Is it not very much to-day as it was with Pendennis and the Fotheringay?

Poor Pen! That first night when in company with Foker in the stuffy little theater at Baymouth he had sat as in a dream following with both eyes and his heart every gesture of that heartless beauty upon the stage whom at first sight he knew he loved madly! Did he not mount at The George and ride as madly homeward to tumble into bed at an unseemly hour, and did he not come "splendi dl down to

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breakfast" (the next morning), "patronizing little Laura, who had been strumming her music lesson for hours before; and who, after he had read the prayers (of which he did not heed one single syllable), wondered at his grand appearance and asked him to tell her what the play was about"?

Then Pen's excuses to his mother. "He must find Foker and Miss Fotheringay, and having taken leave of his mother and little Laura, having conducted himself during breakfast in a very haughty and supercilious manner, was presently heard riding out of the stable court. He went gently at first, but galloped like a madman as soon as he thought he was out of hearing."

Yes, indeed, it is quite the same to-day.

It happened that I knew one of these latter-day Pendennises who insisted upon my spending week's end with him at his house, a house which, tho not as imposing as that of my young lord, was far livelier. It was a low rambling structure provided with a hunting-stable and outlying kennels.

Indeed, my young friend lived most of the time in the saddle, a house in which lived too a

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white-haired, ruddy old father and a sweet-faced mother and three slim, trim, fair-haired, and very shy young daughters, the edges of whose looking-glasses were stuffed full, instead of with the usual collection of dinner and dance invitations, with dozens of cards telling the exact date and hour they were due upon the hunting-field. As for that hospitable old gentleman, he, being well advanced in years, rode but seldom outside of his morning constitutional (one of which would have sufficed me for a week), and found comfort in his remaining waking hours with his port and his favorite books.

In the afternoon my friend would summon his tandem and we would take to the highroads and byroads of Kent, of which there is no prettier country in all England. A tandem is an invention in which one trusts one's life to the good-will of the leader; evidently my young friend and the leader—a proud black horse—were on the best of terms, for the latter kept decently to the road, altho it seemed to me at times he was about to sail off in the air. There was a subtle humor lurking in the stylish beast's eye which I did not like.

But dogs and horses, hurdles and rabbits, do

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COOKHAM LOCK ON BANK HOLIDAY

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not constitute all of life. A plot had been laid for Blue Monday, a plot in which there was a prime conspirator, my host, and a willing accomplice, myself. Monday, it was understood, he should dine with me in London. By gad, sir! he looked forward to this impromtpu spree as a soldier might to a twenty-four-hour leave from his barracks.

I can not say that his conservative family were as enthusiastic over the idea as they might have been. They had no liking for this young man's stopping in town, and they openly suggested at luncheon a late train back that very same evening.

Bless me! what a time in getting away, but we gained our point, or rather, I gained it for him, and we went into London town as free as two sailors and passed one of those staidly hilarious evenings at dinner, the play, and supper, that would have seemed to any reasonable Parisian a waste of money and time. To this merry young Englishman it was a lark—this night's freedom from the great house and its village, where

> "Those whom you seldom ever knew
> Knew almost every single breath you drew."

Tuesday morning that genial fellow took the

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train back to the house of his father, while I remained in London town, but not for long.

A handful of days and the next leaf torn from my calendar would disclose another Sunday. I had had enough of these London Sundays. For me at least there would be no more London Sundays, no more Brighton, no more silent streets or thirsty hours, no more tame concerts, no foggy afternoons. Next Sunday would be replete with sparkle and good cooking, rare wines from Bordeaux, light laughter and charm; and with these things gleaming merrily in my imagination, I sent a telegram. It was to an old friend, Charles, the *maître d'hôtel* at the Restaurant Weber. It counseled him to secure a table for two in my favorite corner at eight, and two seats at the Théâtre des Capucines.



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Envoi

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Envoi

"ENTENTE CORDIALE!" magic words!

It will be interesting to see the result of this cordial understanding, so sympathetic and bizarre. I have seen the French flag crossed in devotion with the English colors and waved gaily in unison to the blare of the band from every music-hall stage in London.

I have seen that august and all-powerful body, the London County Council, paraded about in Parisian landaus, guarded by cuirassiers, taken to the opera, shown the tomb of Napoleon, and fed at the expense of the République Française.

And the school-children, bless their little hearts! Did they not rehearse for weeks before their arrival and learn like good little parrots, "God save zee King" (not one word of which they understood), and did they not unload it from their minds nobly on that memorable day, in their starched white frocks and neatly combed hair, well-soaped and secured with a blue bow? Yes, indeed, "Vive les Anglais!"

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I have been kept awake in London town by wild cheering, and the "Marseillaise" mingled with more "God save zee King!" bellowed up from a rousing banquet given to the City Council of Paris.

"Here! Here! Encore! Bis! Allons enfants de la patrie, e-er! Le jour de gloire est arrivé! Hip, hip, hooray!"

It was the German *maître d'hôtel* who winked one eye when it was all over.

But it is not all over yet. In the mean time:

"Aftaire you, mon cher Jean Bull."

"Tut! tut! After you, my dear Gaston."

"Mais pas du tout, mon cher ami, I in-siste."

"Nonsense! Egad, my dear fellow, I'll not hear of it."

"Zen we shall, what you say, make zee compromise, and link zee arm."

"Splendid idea, old chap. You know I've been thinking we *are* rather clever at diplomacy, eh? Come, a night-cap before you go."

"Merci! my heart is too full zat you do me zee honaire."

"Waiter, two Scotch and sodas."

"But the entente cordiale, mon cher?"

"Ah, yes, I forgot. Put in a dash of absinthe."

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